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THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 1997

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## Israeli team meets with el-Baz in Cairo

By JAY BUSHINSKY and news agencies

Egypt's mediation effort picked up new momentum yesterday as a four-member Israeli team conferred in Cairo with presidential aide Osama el-Baz on a formula designed to bring Palestinian Authority representatives back to the negotiating table.

ently exists, but the terms were interpreted in Jerusalem as being more compatible with Egyptian, Palestinian and European views than those held by Israel.

project was launched in March. However, Arafat is believed to be holding back because of hardliners within his governing elite.

"But we don't have any new ideas and I don't believe our team should be expected to produce them," a source said.

Secretary Danny Naveh, Foreign Ministry aide Ya'acov Bardugo, the prime minister's political adviser, Uzi Arad, and attorney Yitzhak Molcho.

It would be preferable to deal immediately with such issues as water, territory, security and "functional matters," the latter refers to the scope and depth of economic relations and administrative cooperation between Israel and the PA.

Erekat's comments followed a meeting in Amman with Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul-Salam al-Majali.

## Netanyahu approves conversion bill compromise

By HAIM SHAPIRO

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has approved a letter of understanding to the non-Orthodox movements regarding a compromise over the controversial conversion bill.

legitimacy to Conservative and Reform conversions in Israel. In return for a compromise solution, the Conservative and Reform leaders from Israel and abroad had agreed to suspend all petitions on the matter to the High Court of Justice until September 15, by which time it was assumed that a compromise solution would be finalized.

## PM weighs cabinet options

In no rush to replace Meridor

By SARAH HONIG

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu indicated yesterday that he is in no rush to reshuffle his government and it is thought by his aides that the earliest he could set the cabinet musical chairs game into motion would be the middle of next week.



Finance Minister Dan Meridor speaks to reporters after resigning from the government at 2 a.m. yesterday. (Flash 90, Courtesy of Ma'ariv)

Sharansky: We have one foot out of gov't, Page 3

## Turkey's Erbakan steps down

News agencies



Necmettin Erbakan (Reuters)

ANKARA - Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, the first Islamist to lead modern Turkey, resigned yesterday in a power-sharing deal with his secular coalition allies.

themselves the protectors of the modern, secular Turkish state and its Western-looking policies, by pushing an Islamic agenda. He hoped to ally their fears by stepping aside. It is not clear if the strategy to ally the military's fears will work.

according to Levy. But the major problem before Netanyahu is the great attachment evinced by Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi to his portfolio.

not involved. In any case, no offer was made to me and if an offer comes I will consider it. But I am not holding my breath waiting to be approached about the portfolio.

If Hanegbi could somehow be pruned away from the Justice Ministry, then the portfolio could be returned to Ne'eman. A senior source close to Netanyahu expressed astonishment last night at "Hanegbi's incredible gall."

Now that Hanegbi is no longer in hot water over the Bar-On Affair, Netanyahu theoretically does not need to be overprotective of him.

Netanyahu said that Katsav may actually be the most comfortable choice for Netanyahu as he would be easy to work with.



## Bank of Israel cuts key lending rate 1.2%

By DAVID HARRIS

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel announced yesterday a 1.2 percent cut in the key lending rate, effective today.

Dan Meridor. Others include: "The expansion of the exchange-rate band from 7% in either direction to 15%."

At the time, it seemed that Netanyahu was rid of a major thorn in his side. He could appoint a new attorney-general and get down to business. Or so it seemed.

Meridor crosses his Rubicon, Page 3

Hanegbi loves the law

AROUND THE WORLD

WZO forum opens

its protest

the onna Finkler Rights

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# NEWS

in brief

## Man injured in Jerusalem grenade explosion

An Arab worker was injured in the hand yesterday when an old grenade that he found in Jerusalem's Mea She'arim neighborhood exploded. The man found the grenade while he was cleaning out a storeroom for a woman in the haredi neighborhood, police said.

## Palestinian's kidnappers found in Jerusalem

A Jerusalem police spokesman said last night that police had located the kidnappers of a Palestinian man who had been kidnapped in Jerusalem, apparently in a clan feud. At first it was reported that the man had been abducted by Palestinian security agents and taken to Jericho. The police later said they were investigating the circumstances of the incident.

## Search still on for Tzur murderer

The IDF sealed off Jericho from Israelis yesterday and continued searches for a Palestinian who killed Eta and Ephraim Tzur last December and who fled from Palestinian custody. Abdel Qaisi had been sentenced by the Palestinian Authority to life imprisonment for the double murder, but escaped from a hospital in Jericho late Tuesday. The closure was lifted yesterday evening, but military sources said Qaisi had still not been apprehended.

## SLA officer and civilian killed in Lebanon

Four Lebanese, one of them a South Lebanese Army officer, were killed and two others wounded in three separate roadside bomb attacks in the Jezzine enclave, north of the security zone yesterday. IAF warplanes struck at Hizbullah targets in the Jezzine region in response to the attacks. There were no immediate reports of any casualties as a result of the air raids. The attacks began in the early hours of yesterday morning. In the first incident, a member of the Lebanese police was seriously wounded and a civilian was lightly hurt when a bomb was detonated alongside their car. Another device was detonated later alongside another civilian car in which a South Lebanese Army officer and a civilian were driving along a regular urban route. They both were killed. In a later attack, two Lebanese civilians were killed. Last night, Israel submitted complaints to the Grapes of Wrath monitoring committee regarding the attacks.

## Man killed in road accident

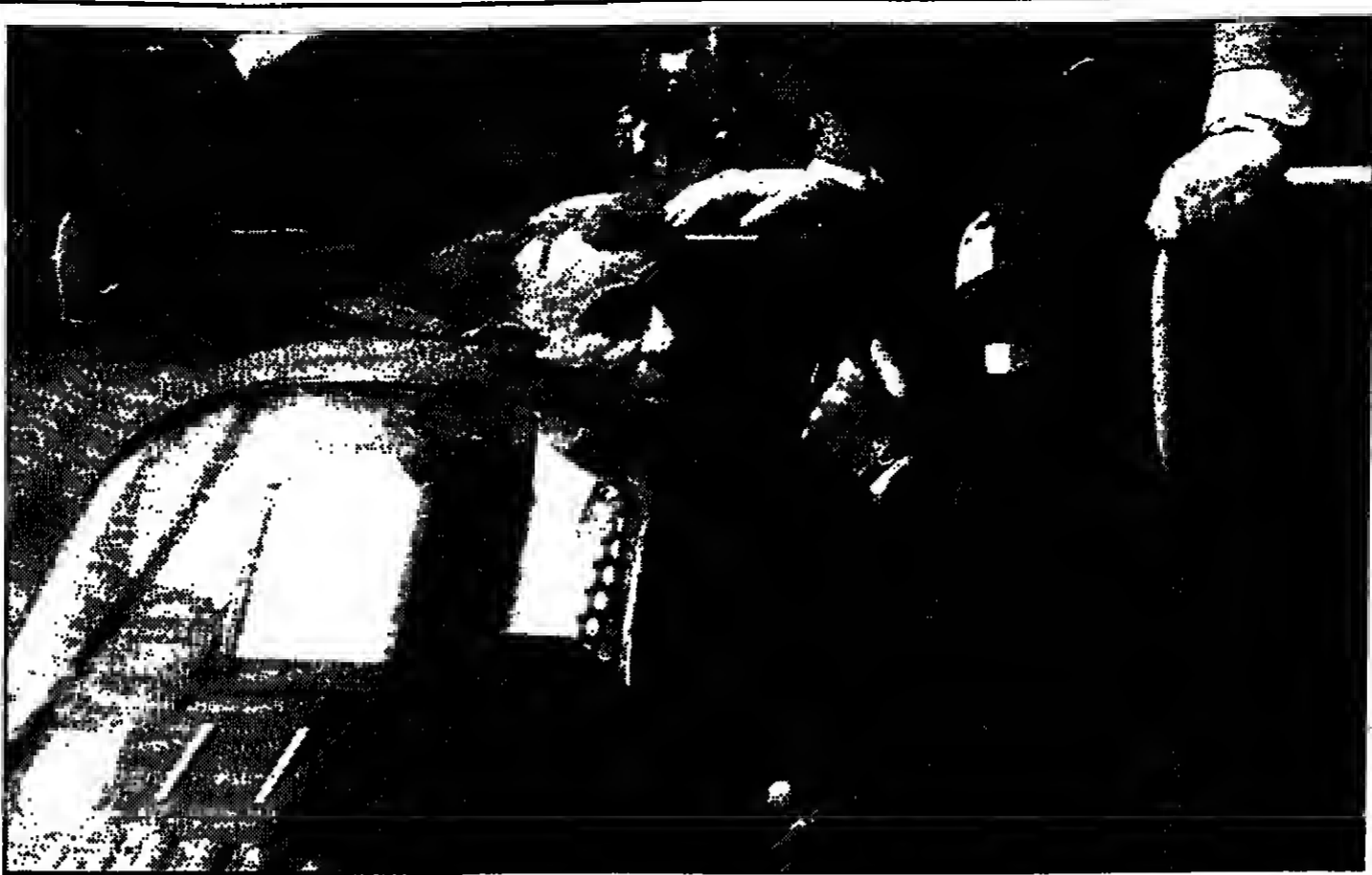
One man was killed and 11 people injured in a head-on collision between two vans near Kibbutz Lahavot Haviva, in Nahal Iron, yesterday morning. Ten of the injured suffered moderate injuries, while one was lightly injured.

## Parents' group calls strike a success

Parents around the country kept their children home from school yesterday to protest the cuts expected in next year's school budgets. National Parents Association chairman Shai Lahman pronounced yesterday's strike a success and said, "The strike on Wednesday was only the opening shot and a clear signal to the government and the Education Ministry that parents will not resign themselves to and will not agree to any cuts whatsoever."

## Israeli suspected of stealing weapons

A joint investigation by the military police and Israel Police succeeded in catching an Israeli suspected of stealing two Uzi submachine guns while visiting his girlfriend on an air force base in the North, the army said. The suspect confessed to the thefts and returned the weapons, the army said. The case was handed over to the State Attorney's Office for further treatment, the army said. The military prosecutor's office was dealing with the suspect's girlfriend.



## Flying High

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai examines a SOIM IAR 99 fighter, which Israel built for the Romanian air force, at the Paris Airshow yesterday. Today Mordechai is scheduled to meet his French counterpart, Alain Richard, for talks on military cooperation and regional issues. Israeli sources said they will discuss the situation in Lebanon, in light of the recent military escalation in the security zone.

(Text: Eldad Beck; Photo: Reuters)

## REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

# Rioters, cops and cobblers

By JON BIRMANUEL

While 50 Palestinian youths methodically used slings to toss stones at Israeli positions for a fifth day on Shalala Street, a few meters away life in Hebron was continuing in its normal bustling fashion, and a kilometer away 100 workers at a shoe factory were methodically putting together the shoes which will later be stamped with well-known Israeli name brands and sold in Tel Aviv. All in their own way were stating their priorities nearly four years after the Oslo accords, including the police whose presence Oslo made possible. They cooled their heels controlling traffic, officiating at school examinations, manning roadblocks, doing anything except dispersing rioters on Shalala Street.

To the TV viewer the scenes from Hebron look little different from scenes of the intifada. But the action is far more casual and more befitting a civil confrontation than a national one. The bullets, though injurious, are covered in rubber and neither side makes a run into the ranks of the other. The stones stop briefly whenever a car honks that it wants to pass through the rubble-strewn street from Palestinian-controlled H1 into Israeli-controlled H2, and they go through unchecked. This is a symbolic, almost ritualistic initiation into political activism by youths aged mostly 18 or less, who were much too young to participate in confrontations with the IDF eight to 10 years ago but heard all about these exploits from their

older brothers, now Fatah activists in their late 20s. Although the shops between the stone-throwers and the soldiers were closed, the Al-Wahid restaurant remained open and from its second floor it was possible to watch the action while eating a fine three-course meal prepared by the chef, who as irony would have it was called Abu Amar, the nom-de-guerre of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Arafat is blamed for cooking up the violent protests that have disturbed this small area of Hebron during the past week, and he certainly allowed them to simmer. A delegation of merchants who called on the Hebron police yesterday to do something were told to wait until the Israeli government changed its tune.

The logic is plain. If Israel offers nothing but warmed over old dishes like the Allon Plan, Arafat's aides say, Arafat can let Fatah organizers continue offering the same old warmed-over heroics, like tossing fire bombs and burning the Israeli flag.

Palestinians are increasingly saying that if Israel does not want a Palestinian state they are happy to go back to their original goal, a secular state in which Palestinians will compete on equal terms for political influence with Jews. The Hebron shoe factory has just completed its annual production order for 200,000 pairs of export-quality sandals made according to Israeli specifications and stamped "made in Israel." They haven't lost a day's work during riots and closures. The sandals know no border.

# FM sources slam EU

By JAY BUSHINSKY and news agencies

Foreign Ministry sources in Jerusalem chided the European Union yesterday for "preempting the outcome of the final status talks" by urging Israel to keep the door open to a sovereign Palestinian state.

Referring to the draft declaration of the EU leaders' two-day summit in Amsterdam, ministry sources said this document "was not helpful." The 15 EU leaders who met in the Dutch capital urged Palestinian leaders, as well as those of Syria and Lebanon, to keep peace efforts alive or risk "a permanent threat to the security of all." They also encouraged Israel not to rule out the possibility of statehood for the Palestinians.

"The creation of a viable and peaceful sovereign Palestinian entity is the best guarantee of Israel's security," the leaders said. "Europe calls on the people of Israel to recognize the right of the Palestinians to exercise self-determination, without excluding the option of a state." Foreign Ministry sources welcomed the EU's support for Egypt's current peacemaking initiative "in which Israel is a partner" as well as the declaration's call on the Israelis and Palestinians to continue their negotiations on implementation of the interim agreement and conclusion of a final settlement.

# US Senate authorizes embassy in Jerusalem

By HILLEL KUTTILER

WASHINGTON - The Senate passed a major foreign relations bill Tuesday night that authorizes \$100 million for construction of a new US embassy in Jerusalem. The bill has three other Jerusalem components.

The proposals must still pass major hurdles before becoming law, including presidential opposition to moving the embassy. All four measures are opposed by the administration out of concern they jeopardize the US's traditional neutrality over the future of the city and because Washington believes any US decisions should await the conclusion of Israeli-Palestinian final-status negotiations.

The bill passed handily by 90-5 because it achieves an administration goal of paying for the US's more than \$800 million in back UN dues, as well as the Republican's goal of consolidating some other agencies into the State Department. As a result, President Bill Clinton might sign the bill despite the Jerusalem provisions. The legislation would require the State Department to list "Jerusalem, Israel" as the birthplace of someone born in the city who is entitled to a US passport. In addition, US government documents must refer to Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

# Egyptian prosecutor wants spy suspects to get life

CAIRO (AP) - A state security prosecutor yesterday demanded life sentences of hard labor for an Egyptian man and three Israeli Arabs accused of spying against Egypt for Israel.

"Egypt waved the flag of peace, justice and stability...but they [Israel] raised another flag, the flag of cheating," prosecutor Hisham Badawi told the court in the fifth session of the trial that began last month.

The case has drawn media attention because of accusations that the Egyptian defendant, Emad Abdel-Hamid Ismail, was seduced by his female co-defendants - two alleged Israeli agents - who provided him their underwear soaked in invisible ink for later use to send secret messages. Ismail "sold everything. He sold his religion and he sold his soul for cheap lust," said Badawi.

The women agents are believed to be in Israel and are being tried in absentia. The third Israeli, Azzam Azzam, was arrested along with Ismail earlier this year. Ismail and Azzam have pleaded innocent, and Israel has demanded Azzam's release.

Yesterday, citing Ismail's confessions to police, Badawi accused Azzam of introducing Ismail to the two women. He said Azzam delivered the invisible ink-soaked underwear to Ismail.

The two women are alleged to have recruited Ismail by sleeping with him when he visited Israel. One woman offered to pay Ismail \$1,000 a month to spy for Israel, and the other taught him how to extract invisible ink from underwear, Badawi said.

He said Ismail was told to gather information on the number of companies in two industrial zones, the situation of Egyptians working in Jordan, security measures taken by Egyptian police towards Egyptians who approached the Israeli embassy in Cairo.

Judge Mohraram Darweesh adjourned the trial until July 19.

# Hebron riots wane on day 5

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

Rioting continued for the fifth day in Hebron yesterday, although it was on a smaller and less intensive scale. Palestinian rioters threw firebombs and stones at IDF troops and border policemen.

The IDF Spokesman said there were no injuries or damages. However, Palestinian sources claim a 19-year-old and a 12-year-old were injured in the clashes.

IDF troops fired rubber bullets and gas pellets to disperse the rioters. The IDF Spokesman said one

Palestinian was arrested and detained for questioning.

The clashes started midmorning and continued into the late afternoon not far from Beit Hasson, in Shalala Street and the side roads that separate H1 and H2.

During the day, reports that Palestinian Police were attempting to quell the riots proved false and as in previous days their absence was noticeable.

However, the rumors appeared to have affected the intensity of the clashes, which were more moderate than they had been on previous days.

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With great sorrow we announce the passing of

## DINA ZUSSMAN

wife of Ya'akov (Jack) Zussman  
one of the founders of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus  
who has died in old age.  
The funeral took place in Jerusalem on Tuesday, June 17, 1997.

- Mourners:  
Daughter: Meira and Professor David M. Serr  
Son: Effie and Tiki Zussman  
Grandchildren: Ronnie, Yoni, Koby, Ya'el, Koby  
Great-grandchildren: Moran, Michal, Aucher, Ilay, Jonathn, Lior and Danielle  
Sister: Liela and Norbert Krieser

## ברוך דיין האמת

We announce with great sadness the passing of

## ALICE JOSHUA

(our beloved "Doda Aliza")

who lived a long and full life of caring and giving of herself to all the members of her family and to her many friends.  
The funeral took place on June 18.

The Joshua and Cohen Families

## Mayor YITZHAK RAGER

Park East Synagogue mourns our long-time friend and honorary member "Ijo", Mayor of Beersheba, who devoted his life to the service of Medinat Yisrael and the Jewish people.

Our deepest sympathy to his devoted wife, Dr. Bracha Rager-Zisman, and the children.

- Rabbi Arthur Schneier  
Michael Scharf, President  
Julius H. Gerowitz, Chairman  
Jerry Forst, Vice-President

הכזמן האחרון

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Labor p

Frenkel den to resign

ILLUMINATING THE



# Rubicon crossed

By SARAH HONIG

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Finance Minister Dan Meridor yesterday accused each other of intransigence and ill-will, which led to Meridor's resignation in the early hours of yesterday morning.

The resignation will take effect at 2:00 a.m. tomorrow morning - 48 hours after tendered. The three ministers who were abroad during the vote - Yitzhak Mordechai, Limor Livnat and Yitzhak Levy - are all returning early, and say they will seek to convince Meridor to pull back his resignation.

However, it is agreed in all political circles that Meridor effectively crossed his Rubicon, especially after he stated yesterday that he had lost all confidence in Netanyahu.

Meridor resigned yesterday after many long hours of deliberations over the new economic plan - first with only Netanyahu, Meridor and Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel taking part, and then, after no agreement was reached, before the cabinet.

When the matter was finally put to the vote at 1:40 a.m., only the two Yisrael Ba'aliya ministers - Natan Sharansky and Yuli Edelstein - voted with Meridor. Meridor then submitted his letter of resignation, having warned the ministers that he would do so if defeated.

Netanyahu yesterday expressed "regret over Dan's decision. I hope it's not final. This was a purely economic difference of opinion, with nothing personal involved."

Netanyahu denied that he had plotted all along to dump Meridor. "I have been seeking a compromise for months on the issues involved, but Meridor would not budge an inch from his stand. I did not want all this to end up as a showdown before the cabinet. But when no agreement could be arrived at, I was asked to let the cabinet decide."

This demand came from Tsomet's Rafael Eitan.

"Foreign Minister David Levy even worked out a compromise on top of the compromise already rejected by Meridor, and Levy was not unsympathetic to Meridor or inimical to his cause. But even all of his effort failed to budge Meridor. Other ministers talked to him and sought to soften him a touch, but to no avail. I don't understand the need to resign and then to accuse me," Netanyahu said. "Meridor could have accepted the decision of the majority, as is common in the democratic process, and stayed on in the government. I don't know why he needed to corner himself like this and reject any compromise, but then accuse me of nefarious plots against him. I still hope I won't have to choose a new minister."

Meridor's version of the cabinet meeting was the diametrical opposite. "It's not true that there were attempts at a compromise, which I turned down. There was one compromise, which Netanyahu foiled."

"His very interest - all of a sudden - in currency fluctuations and the urgent need he felt to deal with it forthwith are all a little more than curious."

According to Meridor, "it was clear to me from the outset that other motives were at play here rather than the subject ostensibly on the agenda... News reports about my impending resignation may have been premature, but not by much. I felt I could not serve in this government any more... I served in Menachem Begin's government and in Yitzhak Shamir's government, but I've never seen anything like this."

Meridor placed himself so solidly in the opposition to Netanyahu that he doubted yesterday he "would be in the Likud if Netanyahu were its candidate for prime minister again. If I had confidence in him and if I supported him, then I would still be serving in his government today, but I resigned - almost one year to the day after this government was formed."

"It is no secret I did not support Netanyahu in the Likud leadership primary of 1993, but as soon as it emerged that he won, I stood behind him and pinned my hopes upon him. I thought that despite the past we could work together, but clearly this could not be," said Meridor. He hotly denied that what happened yesterday was a direct outcome of his anti-Netanyahu stance during the Bar-On Affair, "but I am not sure that those involved in the Bar-On Affair did not also cook this up." This was taken as a swipe against Prime Minister's Office Director-General Avigdor Lieberman.

Most ministers, however, agreed with the Netanyahu version of events. Levy said: "I tried to work out a compromise. The prime minister agreed to what I proposed, after much back and forth between the sides. No amount of persuasion, however, could prevail on Meridor and it's a shame. I was not the only one who tried to talk to him and convince him to see reason, but it was as if his mind was all made up before I tried."

The Third Way's Avigdor Kahalani said he had voted for the Levy compromise and not against Meridor. "Meridor should have not been so unyielding. He should have accepted the compromise which was definitely one he could have lived with, as it met him far more than half way. Netanyahu wanted a compromise and all ministers took part in efforts to effect one."

Eitan, who insisted on the cabinet session, said: "I deeply regret that Meridor left the government. It will not be the same without him. He introduced special qualities to the government. It's too bad he would absolutely not bow to the decision of the majority in a vote which was not against him."

## The vote that made Meridor quit

The following is the result of the cabinet vote early yesterday morning on Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's proposal on the exchange-rate range:

In favor (8): Netanyahu, Ariel Sharon, David Levy, Rafael Eitan, Yehoshua Matza, Efraim Suissa, Tzahi Hanegbi, Eli Yishai

Against (3): Dan Meridor, Natan Sharansky, Yuli Edelstein

Abstained (3): Moshe Katsav, Avigdor Kahalani, Yitzhak Levy



Joining forces

Women's leaders link hands at a WIZO lunch in Jerusalem yesterday. From left, they are Hadassah president Marlene Post, Na'amat chairwoman Ofra Friedman, World WIZO president Michal Modai, and Emunah chairwoman Rahel Silveski. (Israel Sun)

## Sharansky: We have one foot out of gov't

By LIAT COLLINS

Yisrael Ba'aliya continued its rebellion within the coalition yesterday, supporting several bills in the Knesset plenum against the government's wishes. Party leader Natan Sharansky said last night that his party already has "one foot out of the door of the government."

Earlier in the day, at a Yisrael Ba'aliya faction meeting, MKs did not rule out the possible collapse of the coalition. Bronfman said in a motion in the Knesset plenum: "We do not believe the government is showing stability. If we can't rectify this, then the coalition has no right to exist."

The two Yisrael Ba'aliya ministers had supported Finance Minister Dan Meridor in the cabinet vote on the economic measures, voting against Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

Communications Minister Limor Livnat, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy, who are all abroad, criticized the handling of the cabinet meeting at which Meridor resigned.

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani (Third Way) said: "We are sad at his loss, but I don't think he was ousted." At a Third Way executive meeting,

however, many members demanded the party act to advance the elections. The secretariat authorized the executive to find ways to prevent the party from being

partner to nonkosher practices."

Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai (Shas) said the cabinet vote had been purely economic and Deputy Health Minister Shlomo Benizri (Shas) said although Shas had had disagreements with Meridor when he was justice minister, "as finance minister in this past year he pleasantly surprised us. I don't think anybody in Shas had an interest in getting rid of him."

David Harris adds: Meridor's resignation was mourned yesterday by Knesset Finance Committee chairman Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism), who said the two had enjoyed a close working relationship over the past year.

He declined to comment on Netanyahu's management of the economy, saying the prime minister has never appeared before the committee, so it would be unreasonable to comment.

## Shamir: I have a candidate to replace Netanyahu

Former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir said yesterday that he would definitely not vote for Binyamin Netanyahu if elections were held now. "I have no confidence in the man and his way," Shamir told Army Radio. Shamir added he favored a candidate to replace Netanyahu as leader of the Likud and prime minister. He refused, however, to divulge the name of the candidate, saying, "I haven't yet agreed on this with the man."

Meridor was later asked if he knew who Shamir's candidate is, and whether he was the candidate. He replied that he did know who Shamir favored, but would not divulge his identity. Meridor said he is not sure if he could support Netanyahu for prime minister in the next elections. "If I thought it was possible to support him now, I'd probably have stayed in the government," he said.

## Labor praises Meridor

By LIAT COLLINS

The Labor faction in the Knesset held what was termed an "emergency meeting" yesterday to discuss its response to the resignation of Finance Minister Dan Meridor.

Labor leader Ehud Barak praised Meridor as "a courageous, talented man of integrity." Barak told the faction the Labor MKs should act to "remove the mask from [Prime Minister Binyamin] Netanyahu's face and present him as he is. It will be enough to make the public lose faith in him."

Several Labor MKs said, however, that Meridor's resignation could strengthen Netanyahu within his party. Uzi Baran said: "The only result of the Bar-On Affair is not that [Justice Minister Tzahi] Hanegbi went, or that Netanyahu went, but Dan Meridor. Meridor is the victim of the Bar-On Affair."

This is in response to the theory that Netanyahu wanted to get rid of Meridor because the finance minister criticized him over the attorney-general appointment. "The public should understand

that a dangerous gang has taken control of the country," Baran said.

Binyamin Ben-Eliezer and Haggai Merom spoke in a similar vein. Merom accused Avigdor Lieberman, director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, of being Meridor's "hanger-on." Former finance minister Avraham Shohat said Meridor should have resigned a year ago over the budget, which Shohat said had been drawn up to gain the approval of Shas leader Aryeh Deri.

"We have a prime minister and a prime minister's office which do not understand and are not aware of the limits of their strength and the rules of their games are in complete contradiction to the rules of law and democratic values," Shohat said.

In a motion to the agenda in the plenum, Shohat later strongly criticized Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel, saying: "He [Frenkel] was a full partner in the conspiracy which brought Meridor's resignation."

Yossi Beilin called on the party

to make an effort to pass the amendment to a law which would enable MKs to topple the prime minister without having to dissolve the Knesset. He said the time is ripe for such an amendment.

Labor faction leader Ra'anan Cohen called on coalition MKs and ministers to support the no-confidence motions in the prime minister which are expected to be voted on this Tuesday. The motions were filed before Meridor's resignation by Meretz and Labor over the government's economic policy.

Cohen called Meridor "the last moral conscience in Netanyahu's government." Meretz leader Yossi Sarid said: "There were two people of integrity in the government - Benny [Ze'ev] Begin and Dan Meridor - and they are no more because the government is not the right company for decent people."

Sarid also said that "Meridor's resignation is not over the diagonal band [of the shekel], but over Ayala Hasson [the Channel 1 reporter whose report kicked off the Bar-On Affair]."

## Frenkel denies link to resignation

By DAVID HARRIS

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel yesterday denied any involvement in the political issues surrounding Finance Minister Dan Meridor's resignation.

"There is absolutely no link between monetary policy and the political process," Frenkel said.

He also denied the suggestion that Prime Minister's Office Director-General Avigdor Lieberman played a role in the tri-party dialogue on the economy.



Jacob Frenkel (Flash 90)

"I had no link whatsoever with the director-general, either direct or indirect, nor was he involved in the monetary decisions," said Frenkel. "There must be no misunderstanding whatsoever here."

With regard to the economic negotiations, he added, there was no attempt at all to dethrone Meridor.

Frenkel expressed regret about Meridor's departure and praised his budgetary and reform achievements over the last year. He added that he hoped the period of uncertainty caused by the resignation would be short.

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"Die Perle" (The Ring) (1928, 97 min., silent, German titles)  
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gyptian prosecutor wants spy suspects to get life

RO (AP) - A state security officer yesterday demanded sentences of hard labor for a man and three women accused of spying for Israel.

gypt waved the flag of peace and stability, but the court raised another flag of "cheating" prosecution. Badawi told the court in a session of the trial a last month.

case has drawn attention because of accusations against the Egyptian defendant Abdel-Hamid Ismail, accused by his female co-defendants - two alleged Israeli spies - to have provided them with "soaked in invisible ink" to use to send secret messages.

ail "sold everything. He is a religion and he sold his soul for the last," said Badawi.

ne women agents are believed to be in Israel and are being held in absentia. The third is an Azzam, was arrested with Ismail earlier this year and Azzam has pleaded guilty, and Israel has denied Azzam's release.

esterday, citing Ismail's admissions to police, Badawi ordered Azzam to introduce a list to the women. He then delivered the invisible ink-soaked underwear to Ismail. The two women are alleged to have recruited Ismail by sleepwalking when he visited the woman offered to pay for him a month to spy for Israel. The other taught him to use invisible ink from water, Badawi said.

he said Ismail was told to give information on the number of companies in two industries, the situation of Egyptian workers in Jordan, security reports taken by Egyptian police, and Egyptian relations with the Israeli embassy.

Judge Meidan, Darna, sentenced the trial will July 1.

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# Uninspiring EU clinches treaty Major departs the stage

### News agencies

AMSTERDAM — The European Union yesterday cobbled together a new treaty, offering little to its increasingly disenchanted citizens and even less to those countries queuing to join the 15-member western club.

Ending marathon talks in the early hours of yesterday, the Dutch EU presidency admitted that the new text, updating the Maastricht Treaty also brokered by the Netherlands five years ago, was modest fare.

"In some areas we did not achieve as much as we proposed, but we should be able to round off EMU (economic and monetary union) and move to enlargement," Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok told a closing news conference. "All in all, the substance of the treaty is very good."

"It's not as strong as we hoped," Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi said following the pre-dawn agreement on a package of EU reforms. "I'm moderately satisfied ... The treaty made progress, but not as much as I had hoped." Prodi told reporters after the leaders wrapped up a two-day summit with night-long negotiations.

Despite the disappointment of some, the leaders insisted the treaty does enough to let the EU take on new members early in the next decade.

Membership talks are expected to start within six months with a dozen applicants. Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic are seen as frontrunners for earlier membership, along with Cyprus.

"The Treaty of Amsterdam is a solid basis for the coming tasks of unifying Europe," said German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair agreed. "Having solved the technical issues, its easier to go ahead with the enlargement," Blair said. "The progress that has been made is very substantial indeed." However, to get agreement from all 15 members, the EU diluted many of the key issues originally planned for the revamped treaty.

France and Germany were forced to abandon plans to give the EU a major defense role in the face of British concern that such a move could undermine NATO.

Instead, the EU agreed on low-level military cooperation in peacekeeping or humanitarian operations.

Grand designs to appoint a senior figure

to give a single face and voice to a credible common European foreign policy also came to little, with a little-known Eurocrat expected to take the job of representing the Union around the globe.

Even the elements of the package that were agreed had their setbacks, with Germany refusing to surrender its veto on asylum policy and Britain, Ireland and Denmark winning opt-outs from moves to beef up cooperation on borders and immigration.

Key to preparing the entry of eastern European candidates were proposals to streamline EU decision-making to prevent gridlock when EU membership expands to almost 30 nations.

The EU nations agreed to take more decisions with majority votes rather than insisting on unanimity. But they did not abolish national veto powers altogether.

"We could not decide at this stage on a new decision-making system," said Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, who chaired the gathering of EU leaders in the Netherlands central bank building.

The leaders said groups of nations within the EU will be free to move ahead with policies they alone favored, but only if all 15 members give them the go-ahead.

They agreed to reallocate the number of votes big and small nations have in EU meetings, but left details for a future meeting.

The EU's chief executive, Commission President Jacques Santer, hailed the agreement as marking "a new stage in European integration." On the first day of the summit, the EU closed a rift between France and Germany that threatened to derail the plan to give Europe a shared currency in 1999.

But new threats to the single currency — the euro — emerged within 24 hours of the deal, when France said it would seek new concessions that were sure to run into resistance from Germany and others.

French Finance Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn said he would seek a softening of the financial requirements nations must meet in order to join the single currency bloc — principally the demand that budget deficits be kept to a maximum of 3 percent of gross domestic product.

Germany refuses to consider a relaxing of the criteria, but like France, it is struggling to reduce its deficit to the 3 percent level. If either country fails, demand will grow for a delay of the Jan. 1, 1999, launch of the euro.

LONDON (Reuters) — Flanked by the men who would succeed him, John Major turned in a final feisty performance in parliament yesterday as leader of Britain's Conservative party.

If Major experienced any sadness at ending nearly seven years as leader, he did not show it. He went through the ritual of attacking Labor leader Tony Blair and smiled at the compliments — and jibes — that his departure sparked.

But his appearance at the dispatch box of the House of Commons was a sideshow next to the extraordinary maneuvering in the party over whether he would be replaced by former finance minister Kenneth Clarke or ex-Welsh secretary William Hague.

Hague, arms crossed, sat on Major's left. To his right sat Clarke, arms crossed. The body language revealed the Conservatives remain just as divided after their election defeat on May 1 as before.

By this afternoon, the depleted ranks of Conservative MPs will have chosen either Hague or Clarke as their new leader and Major will be history.

Will the history books treat him kindly? Paddy Ashdown, the leader of Britain's third party, the Liberal Democrats, sketched out one epitaph.

"He is the fourth-longest-serving prime minister of this century. He led this country in time of war, he gave Ireland a chance for peace, and I venture to say he's the only leader of the Conservative party who might have kept this lot together for the last three or four years," Ashdown declared at prime minister's question time.

Pointing to the Conservative ranks, Ashdown went on: "For that, they should be grateful to him and we shall miss him — I think!" There was laughter, but not much of it was on the Conservative side of the House.



Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl: A solid basis for unifying Europe. (Reuters)



Cambodia's co-premier Hun Sen talks to reporters in Prey Veng, a village southeast of Phnom Penh yesterday. (Reuters)

## Pakistani nabbed for CIA slayings

FAIRFAX, Virginia (AP) — A four-year international manhunt for the alleged killer of two CIA employees ended yesterday as a somber, bearded — some say troubled — Pakistani faced charges in a Virginia court.

Mir Aimal Kanshi, arrested last weekend with the secret help of Afghan citizens and the government of Pakistan, faces the death penalty if convicted for the rush-hour slayings outside CIA headquarters that stunned the nation's spy service.

Kanshi, wearing a dark green prison suit, sneakers and a lead identification wristband, appeared in a two-minute court session early yesterday. He told Judge J. Howe Brown that he understood the charges against him but could not afford an attorney. Brown ordered that a lawyer be appointed to represent Kanshi and set a court date of June 27.

Kanshi faces 10 charges, five for the two murders and three woundings, five more for illegal use of a weapon in those assaults.

"At this juncture, I'm going to ask for the death penalty," Horan said after the hearing.

It was the final leg in a journey that brought Kanshi, 33, from hiding in Central Asia to his arraignment in Fairfax.

One of the FBI's 10 Most Wanted Fugitives, Kanshi fled the United States after the Jan. 25, 1993, shootings on a busy boulevard, where a gunman using a Chinese-made AK-47 assault rifle shot at people in cars waiting to turn into the CIA's Langley, Virginia, headquarters during the morning rush hour.

The attack turned a routine morning commute into mayhem.

CIA employees Lansing H. Bennett, 66, an analyst, and Frank Darling, 28, a communications engineer, were killed.

BRAZZAVILLE (AP) — The US ambassador flew out of the Republic of Congo's troubled capital yesterday, one of the last foreigners to escape the 2-week-old civil war in this Central African nation.

A new cease-fire was holding yesterday morning, after heavy firing from both sides before the truce went into effect at midnight. The truce is designed to allow France to pull out the 1,200 troops it used to withdraw thousands of civilians

from Brazzaville. Heavy fighting — especially over the airport, which French troops now control — is expected as soon as the three-day cease-fire expires.

"The cease-fire remains fragile," US Ambassador Aubrey Hooks said before boarding a private charter plane.

"We are talking now about an accord so that both parties control the airport. We hope that they are successful, but the situation remains

fragile and tense." Hooks and 11 other members of the US Embassy staff, including six Marines, headed to Kinshasa in neighboring Congo, formerly known as Zaire. A Peace Corps volunteer and members of an emergency team sent in last week to help close the US Embassy left on a later flight to Libreville, Gabon.

The presence of French troops has so far kept President Pascal Lissouba's army from all-out battles with forces loyal to the country's former dictator, Gen. Denis Sassou-Nguesso.

But France began withdrawing its soldiers Monday, saying their job of evacuating foreigners was nearly done. They flew out nearly 6,000 foreigners, most of them French, from the former French colony.

UN envoy Mohamed Sahnoun met in Brazzaville yesterday with Lissouba, and was to speak later in the day with Sassou-Nguesso and Brazzaville Mayor Bernard Kolelas. Kolelas has tried to mediate the dispute between Lissouba and Sassou-Nguesso.

"We have on the one hand this young democracy which wants to live," Lissouba told reporters after the talks. "On the other side, I do not know what they want."

Peace talks held Monday and Tuesday in neighboring Gabon broke down, apparently over Sassou-Nguesso's demands for international observers to form part of an independent commission to oversee elections scheduled for July 27.

## Pol Pot surrenders

PHNOM PENH (Reuters) — Pol Pot, the reviled mastermind of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge guerrilla movement, surrendered to his former comrades yesterday, Khmer Rouge radio announced.

The radio, under the control of a rival rebel faction which has broken with the leader of the 1975-79 "killing fields" regime, said he had turned himself in to "confess." But the report could not be independently confirmed and was met with skepticism by Co-Premier Hun Sen. Rumors of the ailing Pol Pot's whereabouts and even his death have flourished and faded before.

"Pol Pot came to confess on June 18," the radio said in a broadcast monitored in Phnom Penh. It did not give any details of what the confession contained.

"The darkness of the brutal regime of Pol Pot which hung over Cambodia since 1975... now the Cambodian people have destroyed it completely," the radio said. "The new regime has started."

Hun Sen said the report had to be treated with care.

"We must be careful about this," he said. "This is not normal. Everything is still a mystery. It is dangerous." Hun Sen, who runs

the country in an increasingly fractious coalition with First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh, said if the report were true, Pol Pot should be handed over to the authorities and prosecuted.

"If Pol Pot is captured, they must bring Pol Pot to trial," he said.

Ranariddh said last week that the Khmer Rouge had split and most of Pol Pot's supporters had turned against him.

The radio broadcast, issued by a political organization under the control of senior Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan, said the organization wanted to live peacefully and would respect international law.

A UN official said Cambodia's two prime ministers were likely to ask the United Nations to convene an international tribunal to bring Pol Pot to justice.

The Khmer Rouge are held responsible for the deaths of more than a million Cambodians through starvation, torture, execution or disease.

Hun Sen earlier yesterday issued an ultimatum to Ranariddh telling him he had to choose between working together or siding with the Khmer Rouge.

## US closes Congo embassy

## Watergate anniversary passes quietly

WASHINGTON (AP) — Twenty-five years after that infamous break-in, Watergate was remembered for the abuse of power it signified and for America's resilience in crisis.

On a strikingly normal day in a city that showed little interest in looking back, old Watergate figures and modern reformers marked the anniversary of the burglary that made Richard Nixon the only American president to resign.

Nixon resigned Aug. 9, 1974, under threat of impeachment. He had struggled to cover up the scandal that broadened from the night when burglars tied to his re-election

committee tried to replace a faulty telephone bugging device installed in the Democratic offices during an earlier break-in.

"There is only — and thank God only — one Watergate," said Sam Dash, chief counsel on the Senate Watergate committee whose hearings riveted the United States.

Across the street from the scene of the break-in, radio host G. Gordon Liddy broadcast the talk show he built from his Watergate notoriety, reliving shadowy events most Americans have long forgotten.

"Another 25 years," he murmured, "and nobody will have a clue about it." A few tourists wandered the Watergate complex.

Scant attention was paid to the Watergate office building where Republican operatives sneaked into Democratic national headquarters early on the morning of June 17, 1972, and got caught.

"They're regular offices now," said concierge Antoinette Aghminu. "There's nothing to see."

At the White House, spokesman Mike McCurry asserted Watergate led to "very positive changes in the structure of American politics."

That legacy includes ethics codes, freedom of information laws and campaign reforms that brought more disclosure to political financing but by no means stopped the use and abuse of big money.

The anniversary featured a tidbit on Deep Throat, who helped *The Washington Post* link the burglary to the presidency and whose identity has been one of the best kept secrets in Washington history.

Reporter Bob Woodward confirmed Deep Throat, the highly placed source not even known to Woodward's partner Carl Bernstein, is still alive and has kept in touch with him. Woodward, who still works at the Washington newspaper as its head of investigative reporting, repeated that he will not identify the source unless he gets permission or until the source dies.

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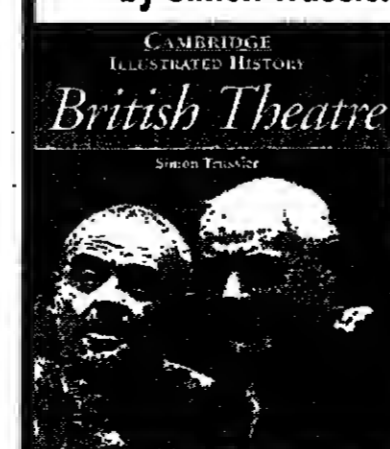
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FLAIR



Parisian views of the Eliane Stoleru collection: (left) a tailored black crepe pant suit; (center) a fifties-inspired peplum jacket with matching below-the-knee skirt; (right) a stretch polo shirt with buttons that match a silk mid-length skirt.

# In a class of her own

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

It's a little difficult to imagine that materials such as vinyl and simulated leathers would be permitted to invade the collection of a purist such as Eliane Stoleru, but like everyone else on the classicists' circuit, she has had to move with the times.

While uncompromising in the quality of her workmanship, Stoleru had to give way to some current fads if she wanted to cater to a yuppie market whose tastes reflect a synergy between clan and trendiness.

Stoleru's designs have always looked as if they came straight off a Paris runway or out of a

high-class Hollywood movie. Simplicity enhanced by minimal detailing has steadfastly been her hallmark and her regular clients are safe in assuming that they can almost always find something to suit their needs. The silhouettes in her current collection are shapely and body-conscious, yet not clinging.

Waistlines are well defined either in the cut or with the aid of belts. Whereas most of her competitors feature hemlines in two extremes - either maxi length or well above the knee - Stoleru has the wisdom to know that there are plenty of women who want to cover their knees, but not necessarily with mid- or maxi-length

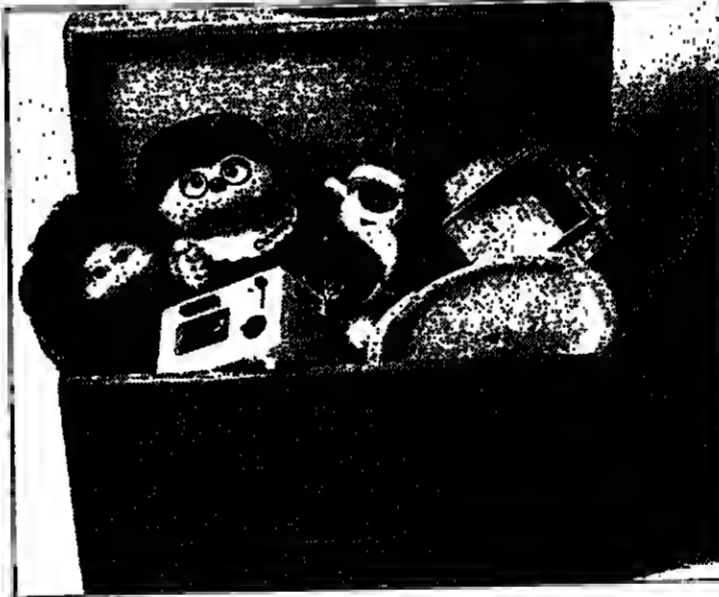
skirts. Her Fifties-inspired suit with belted peplum jacket and swishing cloche skirt is simultaneously smart and comfortable and falls to a flattering length about 2-3 centimeters below the knee, making it a perfectly respectable length for Orthodox women. For formal occasions, Stoleru has a slim-fitting maxi skirt

topped by a softly tailored, ribbon-trimmed jacket. Women who have no compunction about baring their arms and shoulders will find attractive, asymmetrically-cut evening gowns with A-line skirts and one bare shoulder. The more casually inclined might opt for a silk, mid-length, front-fastening skirt with striped

stretch-fabric polo shirt in which the exaggerated collar provides an eye-catching touch. Stoleru's clothes do not come cheap, but considering the top-grade fabrics and the workmanship, they're not all that expensive either. Prices start at slightly in excess of NIS 2,000 and move up to around NIS 6,000.

# A second chance for last year's favorite

By CANDIS THOMSON



Why discard last season's rejects when you can sell them?

At Andi and Tom Moore's trend-spotting Toy Traders, success is built on the fickleness of children and their parents.

The Moores have watched the American toy trends for 17 years from their shop in the back of a strip mall in Silver Spring, Maryland. Carrying toys washed up in the prime of their stuffed lives, parents and children come to the Moores in hope of buying or swapping them for ones that look more exciting or seem newer.

"Things that stimulate them visually are hot," says Andi Moore of her young customers' preferences. "When they're not stimulated anymore, it's over. Parents are responsible. We've told them it's OK to like something for a very short time and move on." Proof of her theory is on the shelves and in the baskets around the shop: Pogs, Trolls, superhero action figures and movie tie-ins sit waiting for their next owner.

"Some toys transcend fads - just look at Star Wars," says Tom Moore.

But who's in the market for secondhand toys? "Kids who want to add something to a set of toys that

have been handed down from an older sibling, but the line's been discontinued: Pocahontas, Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast," says Andi. Kids who are watching reruns on the Cartoon Network and decide they have to have a certain toy.

Thunder Cat, a hip character more than a dozen years ago, is back. "When it came out the first time, 15 years ago, I had a dozen of them. Now I don't have one," Andi says. But in contrast, she says, "I have He-Man coming out of my ears, and my hope and

dream is he comes back and I make a killing."

Andi says there's a pattern of "six months from peak to disinterest. Then parents put up with the toy lying around for another couple of months before they want to get rid of it. Then we begin seeing them."

Jill Krutick, a leisure analyst for New York-based Smith Barney, says the furry-red, must-have toy of last Christmas is out out of the picture. "Historically, hot toys have run a three- to five-year course," Krutick says. "But now, with heavy marketing and promotion, the flash in the pan is much more pronounced." Toy manufacturers use "product extension" in an attempt to keep youngsters' interest, analysts say. For example, Tickle Mc Elmo has been upstaged by second-generation erudite Elmos who babble the alphabet.

The frenzy for Beanie Babies (and Teenie Beanie Babies) was fueled by the same lack of supply that begat Elmo-mania. For its Happy Meals promotion, McDonald's ordered 100 million Teenie Beanie Babies: Patti the Platypus, Pinky the Flamingo, Chocolate the Moose, Snort the Bull, Lizz the Lizard, Chops the Lamb, Goldie the Goldfish, Speedy the Turtle,

Scamore the Seal and Quacks the Duck. But that wasn't enough, and McDonald's cut off its promotion three weeks before the scheduled May 15 termination date rather than deal with irate families.

Krutick says it's difficult to forecast the popularity of a toy and that "no one wants to get stuck with a whole boatload of these items."

Whether a toy is a success or failure, sooner or later the Moores are on the receiving end. The secondhand toy business started out of necessity. "I had three children, a house full of toys, and nobody wanted them, not even on consignment," Andi says.

She started the business with her mother, now retired. Her brother got the idea of selling franchises, and now there are three other stores. The Moores sold the household of toys only to begin collecting them - dolls for her, action figures for him. Their children, now teenagers, are quick to explain to visiting friends that the playthings on the shelves and hanging from the ceiling of their home belong to their parents.

"It started as a hobby," says Andi. "It became an addiction and a business." (The Baltimore Sun)

## CAVEAT EMPTOR!

# Skip those lines

By RUTHIE BLUM

I'd be willing to wager that the main cause for expired visas and passports in this country is dread of waiting in line at the Ministry of the Interior. The second cause may have to do with the prospect of filling out some incomprehensible form, only to be sent to the end of the said line due to it having been the wrong form. What many of you may not know is that for the past few years the Interior Ministry has been operating small branches, scattered throughout the country, which enable us to take care of business during more convenient hours, and to do so without having to wait in long lines. (Details of some of the branches are listed towards the end of the article.) But the even better news is that most Interior Ministry services are also provided through the Postal Authority to move valuable documents from one place to another without losing them in some Bermuda triangle of mail. I can only say that in my own case, as well as that of many acquaintances, there have been no mishaps yet.

In short, I highly recommend taking advantage of the special services offered by the ministry, including: deposit boxes (in which request forms and documents can be placed at all main offices), regular mail service and local mini-branches.

The following services can be provided through the mail, as well as at all branches and other mini-offices:

1. Birth certificate for anyone born in Israel.
2. Death certificate for anyone who died in Israel.
3. New Israeli ID card, due to changes in personal details.
4. Replacement of worn-out ID attachment.
5. Replacement of ID attachment, due to loss or damage.
6. Registration sheet ("tamzit rishum").
7. Inquiry on entry and exit dates to and from Israel.
8. Address location for another person.
9. Change of address.

10. Registration of a newborn child in parent's ID card.
11. Passport for an adult to replace an expired passport.
12. Passport renewal (extension), for passports under 10 years old.
13. Renewal (extension) of travel documents issued less than two years earlier.
14. Israeli visa renewal.
15. Document proving Israeli citizenship.
16. Invitation to visitors (tourists) from abroad.
17. Order (to hire) foreign workers.
18. Extension of license to reside in Israel for foreign workers, volunteers and temporary residents.

NOTE THAT for each of these services, different documents and fees are required. Also, for some of the services, the request must be sent by registered mail. For information regarding any Interior Ministry service, you can call one of the following phone numbers, 24 hours a day: (02) 629-4250, (03) 565-3250, (04) 830-3250 (all in Hebrew); (03) 565-3260 (Russian); (03) 565-3270 (Arabic).

For information regarding the licensing of firearms, you can phone one of the following numbers: (02) 629-4290, (03) 565-3290, (04) 830-3290. The Interior Ministry website is located at: <http://www.knesset.gov.il/cabinet/inter.htm>.

There are 46 Interior Ministry offices throughout the country. The areas which have the most branches are Jerusalem (which has 11 local offices, in addition to the main ministry office and that in eastern Jerusalem) Haifa, Netanya and Beersheva. Not only do lines tend to be shorter at local offices, but the hours that the offices are open to the public are often more convenient than the standard ministry hours.

Prior to any visit to the Interior Ministry - or to sending any form through the mail - make sure to inquire about required documents and fees, as well as about whether certain services can be performed for another person, in his or her absence.

You are invited to offer personal stories about goods and services in this country. Write to: Ruthie Blum, POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem.

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## The cost of aid

The High Court decisions in the Bar-On Affair, the controversies around proposed budget cuts and the shekel exchange rate, and the political machinations in the cabinet have dwarfed two major recent developments in Israeli-Jordanian relations. Israel has in the past month agreed to submit to Jordanian demands that it provide more water to Jordan, essentially accepting the Jordanian interpretation of the relevant water supply clauses in the peace agreement. The government also has apparently agreed to pay \$50 million annually to Jordan.

The monetary assistance to Jordan is part of a US-proposed multiyear program slated to provide the Hashemite kingdom with over \$150m. annually in additional assistance. There is some speculation that the US was pushing to implement this now because of the Jordanian elections scheduled for November. Giving the Jordanian population the sense that financial "fruits of peace" are imminent can boost the parties and candidates that support the peace process.

Although there had been talk of Israel accepting a \$50 million cut in US economic aid to provide this funding, the plan now calls for US financial assistance to remain intact, with Israel's share of the assistance to Jordan to be paid directly from Israel's treasury.

In other words, the \$1.2 billion in annual US economic aid to Israel will continue. Israel, in turn, will give \$50m. to the Regional Peace and Stability Fund, most of which is designated for Jordan. This arrangement is being explained as resulting from Israel's fear that accepting a reduction in US assistance will establish a precedent in Capitol Hill, bolstering congressmen who would like to eliminate all financial assistance to Israel.

The reasoning here appears to be flawed. In a triumphant speech to Congress last July, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu promised to begin a long-term process of gradually reducing the level of economic assistance to Israel. He later backed away from this commitment, despite the fact that US economic aid has been increasingly shrinking as a proportion of Israel's GNP.

Many economists argue that it would be to Israel's benefit to slowly wean itself from US financial assistance. Congress remains very supportive of aid to Israel, but is looking for signs that Israel is developing a plan to implement gradual cuts.

For Israel to appear generous by accepting reduced funding which would go to Jordan, "for the sake of peace," would have accrued it some good public relations; it is unclear why the gov-

ernment decided to devalue it with a convoluted funding scheme.

Israel's willingness to reduce available water resources by pumping 50 million cubic meters a year from Lake Kinneret and giving it to Jordan is also problematic. The problems began with the wording of the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan, signed in October 1994. The agreement stated that the two nations would cooperate on finding additional sources of 50 million cubic meters of water per year for Jordan, suitable for human consumption. There were no details provided as to what sort of "cooperation" was intended, who would pay for the additional sources and what would happen if an honest search did not turn up any economically feasible sources.

This sort of ambiguity in international agreements is dangerous. It usually signals either a strong disagreement which is being papered over, or a clause inserted "for appearances sake only" which neither party seriously intends on following through.

In this case Jordan took the clause very seriously, and provided a highly one-sided interpretation: It expected Israel to offer to grant Jordan the additional water, largely at Israel's expense. This interpretation was rejected by Israeli negotiators, leading to an uncomfortable crisis in relations.

The Prime Minister's Office and the National Infrastructure Ministry made major efforts to resolve the dispute, and eventually did so, basically by accepting the Jordanian interpretation. Israel will every year grant Jordan 50 million cubic meters of inexpensive water from the Kinneret, until such time as a desalination plant is constructed to supply Jordan with the water. The residents of the Beit She'an valley, who will suffer from the diversion of the water to Jordan, are to be compensated by a complicated government scheme to use less water to raise fish in the valley's artificial fisheries.

As *Ha'aretz* commentator Zev Schiff points out, neither the Defense Ministry nor the Treasury were consulted on this arrangement, despite the fact that the Treasury now estimates the cost of implementing it to be in the neighborhood of \$500m. No one knows where this money is to come from.

Making efforts to assist Jordan, which suffers from serious economic problems and resource shortages, is certainly important. Jordan's strategic role in the region is invaluable to Israel and must be maintained. However, such efforts must still be reviewed as to their economic and diplomatic costs to Israel, to reduce the price we pay to a minimum.



## Mubarak's theater co.

Israeli Druze Azzam Azzam, caged in a heavily-guarded Cairo court where he is on trial for spying, cries: "I am innocent-innocent!" His protestations are given wide media coverage in Egypt. Mobs egged on by an Egyptian lawyer chant "Traitor, traitor!"

Natan Sharansky, remembering his years in a Russian cell on trumped-up charges, protests vigorously, but is advised by Netanyahu's administration, "Cool it."

The reason? It is considered expedient in Jerusalem not to upset the Egyptian president after his recent posture as a reasonable man busy coaxing Palestinians and Israelis back to the negotiating table.

But this mask of conciliation is just one of several disguises Mubarak dons and doffs as he flits on and off stage, the leading player in an Egyptian theater of the absurd.

His first pose is as the Moslem hero seducing the Cairo mob, using Azzam to demonstrate Israel's evil intent toward Egypt and, by extension, all Arabs.

Mubarak wears his second disguise for the benefit of Washington, in particular powerful Republican congressmen, outraged by the "vicious" antisemitic cartoons and articles published in the Egyptian media.

Fearful that US economic aid might be blocked or curtailed, Mubarak has ordered his "free" editors to desist from using Nazi-style anti-Jewish propaganda, for the time being at any rate. Diplomats in Cairo have commented on the recent muting of virulent antisemitism in the major media.

Mubarak mask number three is the "deus ex machina device": a supernatural (Egyptian) force suddenly appears from the sky to solve a seemingly-insoluble problem.

Onto the stage leaps Osama el-Baz, Mubarak's chief political adviser-turned-magician, scuttling between Egypt, Gaza and the Jewish state in a bid to get Arafat and Netanyahu to embrace each other again.

He poses between Arafat and Netanyahu, every bit the honest broker, and never mind that the man is known to be a virulent Israel-hater. After all this is pure theater, where we are expected to suspend reality.

Mubarak's diplomats in the US warned him that his attempts to sabotage American peace-making efforts between Israel and the Palestinians were causing deep resentment in Washington. Mubarak's advice to Arafat - get

### URI DAN DENNIS EISENBERG

tough and act tough - was angering both the Senate and Congress. So off el-Baz went, scurrying between Egypt, Gaza and Israel with a sincere expression on his face and every appearance of trying to coax the dove of peace to alight on the shoulders of Arafat and Netanyahu.

**As a play, the performance would qualify as low-grade farce. But this is for real, and it's a tragedy**

But there is a fatal flaw in the Egyptian president's histrionics. This should be the moment for Yasser Arafat to act meek and mild, supporting el-Baz's efforts. After all, it is no secret that the PLO chief doesn't move without "consulting" the Egyptian president (read: doing what Mubarak says).

Yet, day after day Arafat foments acts of violence against Israelis, every day there are riots in Hebron.

And Netanyahu, aiming to prove to disillusioned supporters that he is really a hawk at heart, says plainly, "Arafat gave the green light for a serious outbreak of violence" linked to aggressive actions by Palestinians against the settlers of Morag in the Gaza Strip.

Another violent act: A 23-year-old Jewish woman is shot by terrorists near Har Adar.

Neither during nor after these incidents is there any sight or sound of Palestinian policemen, the ones who are supposed to be preventing violence.

As if to mock Israelis even more, terrorist killer Abdel Qaisi is allowed to "escape" from his prison cell in Jericho to safe asylum in Gaza.

Qaisi, the murderer of Eta Tzur and her 12-year-old son Ephraim of Beit El, seems to have been the beneficiary of the Jericho saying: "Lock the prison door in daylight, but open the window at night."

Peace envoy el-Baz hasn't seen fit to utter a word about this latest outbreak of Palestinian violence.

MUBARAK'S aim is transparent. While soothing American anger by giving the impression that he is curbing his press and acting as a

peacemaker, he quietly encourages Arafat to continue provoking violence, then blame Israeli for "Palestinian frustration."

This was the tactic that led docile Israeli leaders Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres - and now Binyamin Netanyahu - to make repeated concessions.

The hint that more concessions are ahead came from our premier this week, when he declared that "what is required right now is to shun violence and return to the negotiating table. We are engaged in the process, with Egyptian assistance, to try to resume negotiations for peace and security between us and the Palestinians."

Netanyahu's words must have caused sly winks to pass between Mubarak and Arafat. In one breath, the premier hooors Mubarak for his peacemaking efforts and accords Arafat credibility by proposing to sit down with him at the table and negotiate, despite Arafat's green light to violence.

As Netanyahu has demonstrated this past year, what that means is that there will be no significant demands on Arafat to fulfill his obligations under the Oslo accords. Instead, he will receive further concessions as thanks for deigning to come to the negotiating table.

One of these concessions has already been signaled. In exchange for Israel's continuing to build Jewish homes on Har Homa, several thousand Arab housing units will also go up in the area.

This will, at a single blow, destroy the role of Har Homa in completing the ring of Jewish suburbs around Jerusalem; and Arafat will gain a bridgehead from Bethlehem into the Jewish capital.

Also on the cards are plans to exclude some Jewish settlements from Israeli control, as maps already drawn up by the administration clearly demonstrate.

Finally, in gratitude to Egypt for allowing el-Baz to bring "peace," any future official Israeli protest on behalf of an innocent man being held in Egypt is likely to be muted.

Staged, a play following these lines would qualify as low-grade farce, and its main actors would be roundly booed.

But this is real life and, as such, it verges on tragedy - for the Jews of Israel, as well as for Azzam Azzam and his family.

The writers are authors of *The Mossad: Secrets of the Israel Secret Service and other books on the Middle East.*

# Ripen or rot

SIMON MONTAGU

Why should you deny yourself the chance of spirituality just because you don't wear a black hat or kippa? The growing so-called "secular Judaism" movement has come under attack recently from unlikely quarters.

It's not surprising that the religious establishment pounced on the proposal to establish a heder yeshiva for the nonreligious, or on all-night study sessions held by Meretz and others on Shavuot. I can also understand secular Jews who don't feel a connection to Jewish tradition, and don't have any more urge to learn Talmud than they do to study nuclear physics.

But when self-styled atheists attack humanistic Judaism for its lack of religious content, it makes me stop and think.

It's strange that some of the same people who bitterly oppose religious coercion unthinkingly accept the Orthodox yeshivas' claim to be the one true voice of authentic Judaism.

It's partly because of those easy labels "religious" and "secular." The way they are used in Israel prejudices a lot of complex issues, and perhaps the time has come to pension them off.

"Religious" should mean something like "believing in a higher reality than our material existence, and committed to a way of life influenced by this belief."

But to most of the population, it has come to mean dressing in a certain way, probably voting a certain way, and being closed-minded and coercive.

So those who don't want to be seen like that feel forced to define themselves as "secular," even if they are passionately engaged in Jewish study. A non-Orthodox heder yeshiva has to be called "secular" to distinguish it from the "real thing."

**Our tradition is a tree with many branches bearing many varied fruits**

We are probably stuck with the "secular" label for now - but "secular yeshiva"? It sounds like "nondairy whipped cream."

IT'S true that humanistic Judaism can't expect to compete with the Orthodox on their own ground.

The certainties of traditional religious belief and the knowledge that one has a rabbi to rely on grant the Orthodox a driving power outsiders can only envy.

But those who can't share these certainties still share the heritage of Jewish sources; and if Meretz people, for example, want to explore the roots of their ideology in the Torah and the Talmud, why is this less "religious" than Kach people trying to justify their beliefs from Jewish sources, just because Yossi Sarid doesn't wear a kippa and Meir Kahane did?

To say that Judaism is meaningless without an explicit belief in God is too easy. In fact, you won't hear too much about God in a conventional yeshiva. An average day's study generally focuses more on the problems that arise when someone's ox gores his neighbor's donkey than on any kind of deep spiritual searching. Humanistic Judaism is certainly an innovative departure from Orthodoxy, but that in itself doesn't make it less powerful or less authentic, or a pale imitation of "real" Judaism.

The Judaism of the Talmud was innovative too. So was the philosophical synthesis of Maimonides and the popular mysticism of the Hasidim. All these faced bitter opposition at the time, and they are all part of the living evolution of Judaism over the centuries.

A fascinating story in the Talmud deals with the question of innovation vs. tradition: God takes Moses 2,000 years forward in time to hear Rabbi Akiva teach Torah. To his distress, Moses discovers that he can't understand a word. But when the students ask Akiva to name his source he replies, "It's a tradition going back to Moses on Sinai," and Moses is consoled.

In other words, the rabbis knew that what they said was oral tradition going back hundreds of years was actually no such thing. Each generation creates its own revelation speaking to its own needs, and it would be alien and incomprehensible to previous generations.

But each generation is also a branch of the tree whose roots are planted in the beginnings of Jewish history.

Akiva knew that Torah is a living organism that bears new fruit from the same sap year by year. If it doesn't grow, it will rot.

The writer, a former yeshiva student, is active in the Learning Community at the Van Leer Institute.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CONCRETE JUNGLE

Sir, - Sam Orbaum's fine article of June 1, "How green was my Rehovot," is not only right on target, but the situation sadly is far worse in our town since Mayor Jacob Sandler's administration has been running the Municipality.

We pay the highest municipal taxes in the country and probably get less city services than any other community. Our street lights are old and outdated and frequently are not on at all. Herzl Street, the main drag in town, has not been resurfaced in over 25 years. Most inner-city sidewalks are full of dangerous potholes. In fact, the mayor's mother sued the city when she fell and was hurt.

We have fewer cultural and entertainment facilities than any other town of our size. Until three years ago, we had an English-language theater, The Rehovot English Players, which was supported by City Hall. It was forced to disband when the municipality demanded that REP pay it rent for a bomb shelter used by the group for rehearsals and making sets. For reasons only known to the mayor, the city government has stopped any and all support for the large English-speaking community.

While a growing community obviously needs to expand, develop and build, it needs a plan. When we settled in Rehovot nearly a quarter of a century ago, it was a small community of middle- and upper-middle-class people who enjoyed living in this small suburban town, surrounded by a beautiful landscape and country-like greenery. Today, we have become a city of nearly 100,000 inhabitants, surrounded by many high-rise dwellings, shopping malls and office buildings, but without parks, grass, trees or flowers - just a mass of mortar, cement and steel.

DAVID FROELICH  
Rehovot.

### THE 'TESHUV' MOVEMENT

Sir, - I am flabbergasted, to put it mildly, to read the reactions of your readers to the articles about teshuva (Letters, May 29). The organizations dealing with teshuva tend to return our youth back into a way of life from the Middle Ages rather than give them Jewish values.

The disgusting part of it is that these movements are financed by our state. If these people had been working on a completely voluntary basis, I might believe more in their sincerity. As it is, they remind me of the missionary schools in Bucharest some 65 years ago. They were very good schools and in the poorer neighborhoods, of course, they succeeded in making converts

because of the financial advantages they offered.

Our Jewish faith has so many wonderful values without the need to live in a strictly Orthodox way. I consider myself to be a prouder and better Jew than many a haredi, although I live a secular life. My parents were ardent Zionists before me and brought their children up here before the state was born.

I wonder where the haredim would be today if we, the secular majority of Jews, hadn't fought for this country. Let them be thankful and keep quiet and go on with their way of life. We won't disturb them as long as they leave us alone.

FRIEDL HIRSCH  
Beit Yitzhak.

### SWISS CARTOON

Sir, - The cartoon showing a Jew in front of a golden Western Wall which Elie Wiesel mentioned in his interview of May 16 would indeed be an unpardonable insult and suited to create feelings of hatred between our nations. I was shocked too and wanted to know who was responsible for it, but none of the important Swiss papers I asked knew anything about it.

In Western Switzerland, I was directed to the regional paper *24 heures*, whose cartoonist Raymond Burki has gained some reputation in the French-language press. He told

me that he had drawn a gold Wall, but out with a Jew in front of it as Mr. Wiesel said, but with members of the Swiss government. This was in reaction to the unfortunate interview with Minister Delamuraz at the end of last year, which was published by only two Swiss papers.

Although I admit that it is not very wise to use the Western Wall for a cartoon, Burki had no intention to insult the Jewish people, he just wanted to criticize the Swiss government.

M. KARNER  
Zurich.

### THE ISRAEL FESTIVAL

Sir, - Once again the Israel Festival has descended from the heavens - unfortunately for a large majority of us, it gets caught in the clouds on the way down.

The cost of tickets is prohibitive, especially if you are one of those families that is fortunate enough to have brought many children into the world. I am a former ballet dancer in New York City and Boston, so you can imagine my pain at the fact that six out of my eight children have never been to the ballet here!

When will culture come to the masses here? Selling tickets at a

much reduced rate an hour before the performance is an accepted practice in many other parts of the world. After all, the seats remain empty and no one gains, neither the public nor the performers (one of the thrills of being a professional artist is to give to an audience - the more the better).

Rather than see the statistics of how many tickets were sold, it is time to read what percentage of the population was fortunate enough to have a taste of "heavenly culture."

ELLEN BASSEL  
Jerusalem.

## PICTURE POSTSCRIPT



A contestant puts her best face forward during the 10th international body-painting contest in Brussels. (Reuters)

## POSTSCRIPT

PRIME MINISTER Netanyahu said a new book portraying wife Sara as jealous and pushy made his blood boil. Newly published *Netanyahu: The Road to Power*, by journalists Ben Caspit and Ilan Kfir, says that in the spring of 1996, on the eve of the formation of the government, Sara took a phone call at her home from Communications Minister Limor Livnat. According to the book, Sara refused to put through the call, because it was a Friday evening. "I ask you not to phone at these hours," she is quoted as telling Livnat. "Bibi is with the children. You're always phoning and it's very troublesome." "That's not true," Livnat responded. "I hardly ever phone you at these hours. And apart from that, it was Bibi who asked me to phone." Sara said she had asked her husband's senior aide to intervene so Livnat would not call her residence again, the book said. When Sara again refused to put Livnat through, Livnat responded: "You're quite mad. Now I believe everything I've heard about you." Two minutes later, Netanyahu called Livnat and apologized, said the book. Netanyahu said the incident was blown out of proportion, and that Sara did not interfere in political decisions. He criticized the media for focusing on his family. "Forgive me for being very angry at these things. It makes my blood boil," he said.

## They call



مكتبة النخيل



he Jerusalem Post  
Ripen  
or rot

BY MON MONTAGU

Why should you deny yourself the chance of spirituality just because you don't wear a black hat? The growing so-called "Judaism" movement is under attack recently from its quarters. It is not surprising that the establishment poured money to establish a new yeshiva for the nonreligious, all-night study sessions led by Herzl and others on Shabbat who don't feel a connection with Jewish tradition, and don't have any more urge to learn than they do to make their physics.

It is when self-styled admirers of humanistic Judaism for its lack of religious content, it makes no sense to think of it as strange that some of the people who bitterly oppose religious coercion are themselves influenced by this belief. But to most of the population it is come to mean dressing in a certain way, probably wearing a certain way, and being clean shaven and recircled.

So those who don't want to be seen like that feel forced to define themselves as "secular," and they are passionately engaged in Jewish study. A non-Orthodox leader yeshiva has to be called "secular" to distinguish it from the "real thing."

Our tradition is a tree with many branches bearing many varied fruits

We are probably stuck with the "secular" label for now - but "secular" yeshiva is a scandalous blasphemy.

IT'S true that humanistic Jews can't expect to compete with Orthodox on their own ground. The certainties of modern religious belief and the knowledge that there is a million to one against the "secular" Jew power can only win.

But those who can't do those certainties will start to see the value of the heritage of the Jewish people. Merely to be a Jew is to have a certain pride and a certain sense of responsibility.

There is a certain pride and a certain sense of responsibility. There is a certain pride and a certain sense of responsibility.

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# They came, they browsed, they purchased



A communal effort at solving a crossword puzzle.



Hercules - and companion - do Hebrew Book Week: Disney has come out with a book series based on the newly released film. (Photos: Jonathan Bloom)

## Hebrew Book Week can still bring a crowd despite the lure of television and the Internet, Allison Kaplan Sommer reports

There's no doubt about it. Book Week is back. Gil Gefner of Ledory Publishing declared with satisfaction as she watched the bustling crowds elbowing one another to get a look at the latest best-sellers in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square. Gefner and other veteran sellers at the stands of the annual Book Week, which has been going on across the country since last Thursday, did not attribute this year's vast improvement in turnout and sales to an inexplicable surge in literary interest or large discounts among the merchandise. "Last year, Book Week took place after a series of really upsetting terrorist attacks, and people were frightened and not very interested in going out to crowded events," said Gefner. "Add to that the fact that they were weary after the elections - many people simply did not make a special effort to go."

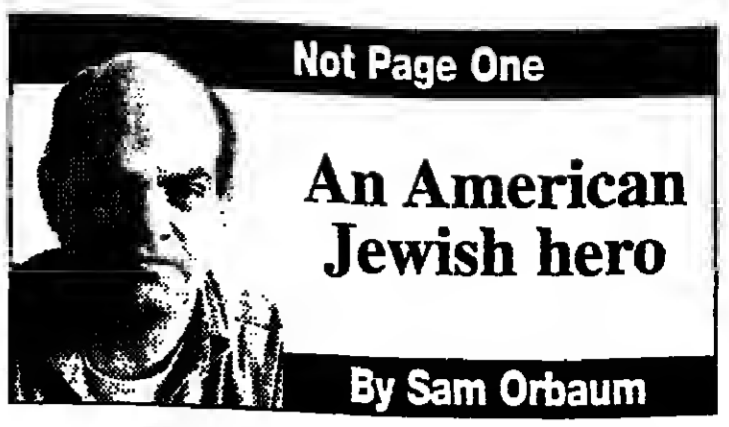
But this year they came, they browsed, and they purchased, proving once again that the annual orgy of opening in the press about lowered interest in reading, and how television and movies and computer games have taken over the minds and imagination of the "People of the Book," is misplaced. In fact, the event is so popular, that to minimize the crowds, the organizers have extended it from a week to 10 days - running until Saturday night.

Publishers work long and hard each year to maximize interest in Book Week. Annually, several "hot" current-events books are released with timing designed to maximize publicity on the eve of Book Week, and their authors are on hand to autograph copies and answer questions. Last year, it was postmortems of the elections. This year, the focus was on the battle of the Bibi books: two tomes released just last week delving into the public and private life of the prime minister.

The Bibi books may be the fad of the season, but some Book Week traditions remain the same from year to year. Book Week proves that Israelis love to cook and eat at least as much as they love to read. This year, as usual, the biggest crowds were drawn to the cookbooks: poring over books devoted to Italian, Chinese, Thai cuisine, and some with a specific focus: one book was devoted entirely to cheesecake recipes.

Sellers reported that the biggest hits were cookbooks by Odem Schwartz, the popular columnist for *Yediot Aharonot*. Entire stands were taken up by her smiling face and sleek blonde haircut emblazoned across the books. Paradoxically, or perhaps logically, diet books placed next to the cookbooks enjoyed healthy sales as well, particularly this year's release, *The Thin and the Brave*, written by Haifa dieting guru Ilana Raz.

To a great extent, Book Week is also for children. Every afternoon children gathered to hear their favorite authors tell them stories, allowing their parents to browse freely. The pre-school crowd was on hand as well: stroller gridlock reigned in the narrow passages between the stands and parents and children could be overheard discussing which books to buy. For many families, Book Week represents the year's biggest pur-



## Not Page One

### An American Jewish hero

By Sam Orbaum

The factory burned down, leaving 3,000 people jobless in a blue-collar American town with no other employment available. The owner said through his spokesman that it was a terrible blow that would kill the town, but it was the government that must assume responsibility for the workers' welfare. He thanked them for their loyalty and wished them a Merry Christmas. He deeply regretted that it would be economically unfeasible to rebuild his textile mill. When insurance paid up, he retired.

Tough luck, but that's life, eh? It's a true story. The first four words of it. What really happened is a fairy tale. Aaron Feuerstein was celebrating his 70th birthday with his family when he got word that his sprawling 750,000-square-meter factory, Malden Mills, was consumed by the worst fire in Massachusetts this century. His \$400 million-a-year business, which produced synthetic insulation fabrics, was a total loss.

The next day, in the depressed town of Lawrence, he assembled his workers and spoke to them. What he said made him an American legend. He announced that everyone would continue to receive their salaries. That he would go on funding their health benefits. That Christmas bonuses would be paid out, on schedule, two weeks hence.

He vowed that the workers, and their town, would not be abandoned. That he was assuming responsibility for their welfare. That 200 employees were being recalled immediately, with more to follow. That he would not quietly collect the insurance money and retire. That the factory would be rebuilt, guaranteeing employment for every one of them.

Then he told them why. Morality, he explained, means more than money. "In those circumstances where there is a moral vacuum," he said that day, quoting

Feuerstein is Orthodox and does not work on Shabbat. A health nut, he jogs every second day while reciting Psalms to himself. An hour a day he exercises - to the verse of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Keats.

Even his major product, Polartec, is a matter of principle: it is made chiefly from recycled plastic bottles. He could have got away with a token monetary gesture to his workers and still been lionized; in rebuilding, he could have proceeded with modest, scaled-down plans, but instead pumped more than \$300 million into what the *Journal of Innovative Management* called "the most technically and environmentally advanced textile plant in the world"; and indeed, in strictly economic terms, the risks incurred by his largesse were utterly insane. He could be a rich retiree, satisfied that he exceeded his obligations.

He could have settled for being a good guy. Or even a great guy. There are few enough of those. But what we sorely need these days are genuine heroes, and that is what Aaron Feuerstein is. Thank you, sir.

Even before the fire, Feuerstein's style went against the grain. He's perfectly comfortable to roll up his sleeves and sweat it out with his workers at the lowest end of the manufacturing process. He remained in the region while other industries skedaddled in search of cheap labor. Salaries at Malden average \$12.50 per hour, one of the highest textile wages in the world, more than six times what he could have paid had he moved his operations to Mexico.

Don't ask this CEO about corporate downsizing or strategic relocation. His magnanimity does not surprise Rabbi Gershon Gewirtz of Young Israel of Brookline. When the synagogue was destroyed by fire three years ago, the Feuerstein family donated \$2 million for its reconstruction.

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## BUSINESS

in brief

### Generali deal on Holocaust fund finalized

Italian insurance company Assicurazioni Generali has agreed to establish a \$12 million fund for the families of policyholders killed in the Holocaust and for other related uses. Its legal representative here, Amihud Ben-Porat signed an agreement with MKs Avraham Ravitz, Avraham Herschson and Michael Kleiner to set up the fund for the next 12 years. *David Harris*

### Internet site makes most of Yellow Pages

Any Internet user will be able to make simultaneous contact with a large number of companies and organizations listed in a single professional category of the Yellow Pages, merely by clicking a single key. Dapei Zahav says the service is available free via its site, [www.yellowpages.co.il](http://www.yellowpages.co.il). The Yellow Pages contains over 80,000 fax numbers in the business sector. *Judy Siegel*

### Digital fears, management changes hit BSKyB

Britain's BSKyB shares lost £770 million in value yesterday on a report the pay television firm could be shut out of the bidding for new digital TV licenses and the loss of key executives. *Reuters*

# 1st quarter jobless rate at 7.3%

Statistics Bureau: Unemployment rose 12.3% over previous 12 months

By DAVID HARRIS

The unemployment rate rose to 7.3 percent in the first quarter, with some 160,000 people out of work, a 12.3% increase from the same period last year, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced yesterday.

Over the last year the jobless figure has risen from 6.3% in the first three quarters last year to 7.1% between October and December to the current 7.3%, the highest figure since the first three months of 1995.

During this week's Caesarea economic conference, Finance Minister Dan Meridor warned that unemployment would reach 7.2% and Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky spoke of 7.5%.

The bureau figures point to the same trend as those published on



Peretz: Government policy could boost unemployment. (Isaac Harari)



Yishai: Government must take urgent action to help development towns.

a monthly basis by the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry, where minister Eli Yishai has

repeatedly called for urgent government action to help high unemployment areas, particularly

in the development towns located away from the central belt.

Those unemployed but actively seeking work in each of the last four weeks between January and March numbered 155,000, a 15.3% increase from the same period last year.

Within the civilian workforce, unemployment stood at 7.15% in the first quarter, up from 6.3% last year.

Overall unemployment among men reached 6.4%, an increase from 5.7% in the same period last year. Meanwhile, there was 8.0% unemployment in the female population, up from 7.1%.

In the same period there was a 2.8% rise in the overall population from the age of 15 and older.

The workforce comprised 53.1% of the country's population, according to the first quarter statistics, just 0.1% down from last year. The male workforce fell from 61.9% in the first quarter last year to 60.9% this year.

Among women that figure rose from 45.0% to 45.6%.

The rise in unemployment is of particular concern to the Histadrut, which is holding mid-way negotiations with the Treasury.

Histadrut chairman Amir Peretz has expressed considerable concern that the government's economic policies could cause heightened unemployment.

## Central bank cuts interest rates 1.2%

Exchange-rate bands will expand to 15%

By DAVID HARRIS

The Bank of Israel's key lending rate will be cut 1.2 percent from today, central bank Governor Jacob Frenkel said yesterday. This was the largest single cut in the rate since March 1995.

Frenkel also announced that the government has approved a series of measures to reduce central bank intervention in currency trading and to ensure greater freedom to foreign currency trading.

The decision to reduce the bank's interest rate to 12.7% came a week before the fixed date for monthly monetary announcements. Frenkel said it was possible to do so, because of the government's agreement to expand the exchange-rate bands.

This is the first cut in interest rates since February. The failure to cut the rate until now — despite demands from the Treasury, politicians, industrial-

ists and academics — was explained by the bank as part of the effort to restrict inflation to the government-set 1997 target of 7%-10%.

The feeling now is that annual inflation will fall within those limits, with estimates continually being lowered, according to Frenkel.

Following the announcement, commercial banks also reduced their leading rates by a similar sum.

In addition to the interest-rate cut, Frenkel explained the decision to expand the exchange rate bands (a decision which was key in Finance Minister Dan Meridor's resignation).

The central bank currently controls the shekel's exchange rate via the so-called diagonal mechanism. This is an axis which describes the difference between Israel's inflation target and its major trading partners' expected

inflation.

Until now the bank has allowed the shekel to appreciate or depreciate by 7% before it intervenes in trading.

The government has now approved the widening of that figure to 15% in both directions, with the hope that the bank will no longer need to buy or sell foreign currency, since the market will freely set the values.

The 15% will be reached during the course of the next 12 months. While Frenkel maintains this will bring greater stability to the economy, Meridor is of the opinion it will lead to an appreciation of the shekel, followed by a decline in exports and subsequently higher unemployment.

The central bank also announced the latest measures in the government's attempt to liberalize trading in foreign currency:

• The ceiling for companies investing in foreign securities will rise to 15% of sales (up from 5%), or 25% of capital (up from 10%), whichever is higher.

• The ceiling for mutual funds investing in securities abroad will be 50% of their assets.

• New immigrants and Israelis who lived abroad for less than three years will be able to keep their assets there.

• The maximum annual support for Israeli students studying abroad will be raised from \$1,000 to \$2,500.

These measures will come into force as soon as the necessary legal processes have been completed.

By this time next year, virtually all foreign currency trading restrictions will be lifted, Frenkel said.



Compromise sought over resuming ivory trade  
A compromise was sought yesterday to resume trade in ivory after delegates to the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species in Harare, Zimbabwe defeated a South African proposal on Tuesday that would ease the ban on ivory trade. (Reuters)

## Optisystems raises \$15m. in Wall St. IPO

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

Optisystems Solutions Ltd., an Or Yehuda-based maker of systems management products, raised \$15 million in an initial public offering on the Nasdaq over-the-counter exchange, CFO Lawrence Bergman said yesterday.

The company sold two million shares at \$7.50 per ordinary share and two million redeemable warrants at \$0.10 per warrant.

The company, with 20 employees, had a post-offering valuation of \$45m.

The money will be used to increase the company's research and development facilities, expand marketing networks and support general corporate purposes.

The offering occurs against a backdrop of decreased activity on Wall Street.

In the first five months of 1997, companies raised \$12.3 billion in IPOs, representing a 53.4 percent fall from the same period

last year. The drop in the number of offerings is also expected to reflect itself in the number of Israeli companies that will raise money on Wall Street this year.

Whereas 19 mostly high-tech Israeli companies went public in 1996, experts expect that number to be lower this year. And, experts say, the companies that do go public will not be able to raise as much money as they did one year ago.

Last year more than half the Israeli offerings totalled \$20m. or more.

"The picture is that the market has been much more selective in terms of the companies that have been able to go public," said Joel Maryles, managing director of Smith Barney's Ramat Gan office.

"It's the natural trend. Sometimes the market is more selective and sometimes enthusiasm reigns." Israeli companies that have hit obstacles in

1997 include Orbit FR/Inc., which cut its offering price; Perio Products Ltd., which postponed its offering; and CheckPoint Security Systems, Ltd., which halved the number of shares it decided to sell in a secondary offering to 2.5 million.

Despite the difficulties, now may be the time for companies with proven histories to raise money on Wall Street.

Companies like Supersol, which has announced its intention to raise \$100m. on Nasdaq in the next couple of months, and Bezeq, which is discussing plans for a US listing, are likely to be successful, analysts said.

"This is a good year for companies with underlying track records to go public," said Mark Méiras, manager of Pacific Mediterranean.

"The time when companies like CheckPoint went about skewering people for money had to stop."

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לְמוֹנֵי כִּסֵּף בְּיָמֵינוּ

### ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS

Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (11.9.96)

Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.750	5.000	5.375
Pound sterling (£100,000)	3.875	4.000	4.250
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.825	1.825	2.125
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.825	0.750	1.000
Yen (10 million yen)	—	—	—

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates\* (18.6.97)

Currency basket	CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Rates**
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	3.8916	3.7514	—	—	3.7155
U.S. dollar	3.3876	3.4825	3.33	3.51	3.4200
German mark	1.9589	2.007	1.93	2.03	1.9302
Pound sterling	5.6622	5.6520	5.46	5.74	5.6330
French franc	0.5833	0.5828	0.57	0.61	0.5886
Japanese yen (100)	2.8958	3.0442	2.94	3.09	3.0191
Dutch florin	1.7508	1.7709	1.72	1.81	1.7622
Swiss franc	2.3532	2.3912	2.31	2.43	2.3621
Swedish krona	0.4400	0.4471	0.43	0.46	0.4423
Norwegian krona	0.4704	0.4780	0.46	0.49	0.4729
Denish krona	0.5171	0.5255	0.50	0.54	0.5203
Finnish mark	0.6588	0.6695	0.64	0.68	0.6512
Canadian dollar	2.4509	2.4805	2.40	2.53	2.4666
Australian dollar	2.5581	2.5943	2.50	2.64	2.5896
S. African rand	0.7524	0.7846	0.68	0.77	0.7573
Belgian franc (10)	0.9545	0.9689	0.93	0.99	0.9597
Austrian schilling (10)	2.7985	2.8437	2.75	2.89	2.8135
Italian lira (1000)	2.0069	2.0414	1.97	2.07	2.0201
Jordanian dinar	4.7321	4.8894	4.73	5.06	4.8738
Egyptian pound	0.9700	1.0500	0.97	1.06	1.0773
ECU	3.8903	3.9125	—	—	3.8708
Irish punt	5.1274	5.2101	5.03	5.29	5.1584
Spanish peseta (100)	2.3521	2.3688	2.33	2.41	2.3457

\*These rates vary according to bank. \*\*Bank of Israel.  
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

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מכאן הכל



ISRAELI SHARES IN NEW YORK

Table with columns for company name, last price, and change. Includes AMEX and NASDAQ sections.

MISHTANIM LEADING 100

Table listing the top 100 Israeli stocks with columns for company name, last price, and change.

INTERNATIONAL SHARES

Table listing international stocks with columns for company name, last price, and change.

NYSE

Table listing NYSE stocks with columns for company name, last price, and change.

TASE ROUNDUP

Table listing TASE stocks with columns for company name, last price, and change.

Stocks hit records on rate cut, shekel plan

Mishtanim 296.81 ▲ 1.20% Maof 305.83 ▲ 1.15%

By FELICE MARANZ and ROBERT DANIEL

Stock indexes advanced yesterday to records as the Bank of Israel reduced interest rates and the government laid out a plan to cut the budget and free up trading in the shekel.

Gaining stocks were led by Bank Leumi and Discount Bank, holding

company Koor Industries Ltd., Israel Chemicals Ltd., Elbit Ltd. and affiliate Elbit Systems Ltd.

The shekel finished at 3.47 to the dollar, compared with 3.42 to the dollar on Tuesday.

Among the handful of losers on the Mishtanim 100 Index were Clal Israel Ltd. Series I and Bank Hapoalim.

The Maof Index of 25 most-traded issues rose 1.15 percent and the Mishtanim Index of 100 issues rose 1.20 percent to 296.81.

"Stocks are up because of the interest-rate cut, and the devaluation that's likely to follow," said Boaz Leviatan, an analyst at Tel Aviv investment firm Sahar Securities.

"A devaluation helps exporters, and it shores up local industries, like textile makers, who have to compete with imports."

The most-active issue was Bank Leumi, which traded NIS 24.6 million worth of shares.

While stocks gained yesterday, said Asher Selva, a portfolio manager at Tel Aviv firm Egar Ltd., they could decline in days ahead as "we sink into political uncertainty."

(Bloomberg)

NEW YORK

Table listing New York stocks with columns for company name, last price, and change.

PARIS

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FRANKFURT

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LONDON

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OTHER MARKET INDEXES

Table listing other market indexes with columns for index name, last price, and change.

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

Stocks dragged down, but dollar resilient

LONDON (Reuters) - Europe's major equity markets and Wall Street all succumbed to selling pressure yesterday, but the dollar weathered a big surge in Japan's trade surplus.

Both the London and Paris bourses were down more than one percent at one point, but they pulled well off their lows during the afternoon, even though Wall Street made a weak start.

By the time Europe closed for the day, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was off around 45 points, or 0.58%, following profit-taking and earnings warnings from two technology companies.

The dollar briefly fell through 113 yen in European afternoon trading, but it recovered later and traders said it appeared resilient in the face of a big surge in Japan's trade surplus in May.

Equity markets saw London's blue-chip FTSE 100 index continue this week's steep falls, unable to shake off interest rate worries, the declining Dow and concerns about the new Labor government's first budget next month.

Paris fared little better, with traders citing investor caution ahead of new Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's parliamentary debut today.

The CAC-40 blue-chip index ended down 0.39%, or 10.86 points, at 2,751.74. The CAC-40 futures contract finished three points down at 2,748.

Analysts said it was unclear whether Jospin would elaborate significantly on economic policy and his privatization plans after only two weeks in government and ahead of an audit of state finances.

The dollar briefly fell through 113 yen in European afternoon trading, but it recovered later and traders said it appeared resilient in the face of a big surge in Japan's trade surplus.

WALL STREET REPORT

Stocks rattled by earnings warnings

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Stocks closed lower yesterday after warnings about profits from high technology companies cooled some of the optimism about corporate earnings for the latest quarter.

Based on early and unofficial results, the Dow Jones industrial average ended down 47.07 points at 7,718.71. In the broader market, declining issues led advances 12-11 on active volume of 495 million shares on the New York Stock Exchange.

WHERE TO GO

Notices in this feature are charged at NIS 28.00 per line, including VAT. Insertion every day of the month costs NIS 520.65 per line, including VAT, per month.

JERUSALEM

Condoled Tours HEBREW UNIVERSITY. Tours of the Mount Scopus campus, in English, daily Sun-Thur., 11 a.m. from Brompton Reception Center, Sherman Administration Bldg, Buses 4, 8, 26, 28, 29. For info, call 5828219. HADASSAH. Visit the Hadassah installations, Chagall Windows, Tel. 02-6416333, 02-3776271.

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DUTY HOSPITALS

Jerusalem: Bkhar Holim (internal, ENT); Shaara Zedek (surgery, orthopedics, obstetrics); Hadassah Ein Karem (pediatrics, ophthalmology). Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Medical Center Dana Pediatre Hospital (pediatrics); Tel Aviv Medical Center (surgery). Netanya: Laniado.

POLICE FIRE FIRST AID

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NEW YORK

Table listing New York stocks with columns for company name, last price, and change.

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Jerusalem Post

parts

afternoon, the deposed Conservative MP's will see either Hague or his new leader and history books treat Paddy Ashdown as the British's third party, the Democrats, sketched on the fourth-longest-serving minister in time of war, Ireland a chance for and I venture to say he's the active party who might at this together for the 10 or four years, Ashdown at prime minister's quest.

ng to the Conservative Ashdown went on "I should be grateful if we shall miss him - There was laughter on the active side of the House.

try in an increasingly coalition with First Minister Prince Nordson th, said if the report were a Put should be handed the authorities and prove

ldh said last week in rther Range had split and Put's supporters had against him.

adio broadcast, issued by an organization under the name of Khmer Rouge King Sihanouk, said the Khmer Rouge wanted to be recognized as the sole legitimate government of Cambodia and that it would accept the United Nations' 1954 Geneva Accords on Cambodia.

Khmer Rouge are still active in the mountainous regions of Cambodia and are being supported by the United States.

anniversary quietly

the anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.



# SPORTS

in brief

## Muster and Capriati out of Wimbledon

LONDON (Reuters) - Austrian Thomas Muster and American Jennifer Capriati are both out of next week's Wimbledon Championships because of injury, a Wimbledon official said yesterday.

Sixth seed Muster has withdrawn because of an injury to his left hip sustained at the Rosmalen tournament in the Netherlands. Swede Jonas Bjorkman will come in seeded 17 and play Britain's Chris Wilkinson in the first round.

Capriati's place will be filled by an additional player from the qualifying tournament after she pulled out still suffering from a right leg injury incurred at the Italian Open.

## Courier loses in Wimbledon warm-up

NOTTINGHAM (Reuters) - Former world No. 1 Jim Courier was beaten in the second round of the \$303,000 Nottingham Open men's tournament yesterday by unseeded Australian Jason Stoltenberg.

The fifth-seeded American, who has slipped to 28th in the world rankings - his lowest placing in nine years - went out 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 in the Wimbledon warm-up event.

Stoltenberg, who has now beaten Courier in three of their eight meetings, will next face Briton Greg Rusedski who defeated Australian doubles specialist Mark Woodforde 6-4, 7-6 in a bad-tempered performance.

Fourth seed Tim Henman, Britain's biggest hope at Wimbledon next week, also went through to the third round after struggling to beat another Australian, Richard Fromberg, 6-4, 6-7, 7-6.

## Dennis Martinez announces retirement

MIAMI (Reuters) - Right-hander Dennis Martinez, just two wins short of becoming the Latin American pitcher with the most victories ever in the major leagues, announced his retirement yesterday.

The 42-year-old Martinez was released on May 24 by the Seattle Mariners. The native Nicaraguan finishes his career with a 241-187 record, two wins shy of Hall of Famer Juan Marichal's 243.

## McColgan quits track for marathons

LONDON (Reuters) - Former 10,000 meters world champion Liz McColgan has quit the track scene to concentrate on marathon running, the Scottish long-distance runner said yesterday.

The decision means McColgan will not try to regain her title at the world championships in Athens in August.

The 33-year-old underwent a back operation last week and felt she would not be fit enough to compete in the world championship trials in Sheffield at the end of this month.

## Ajax sign Danish midfielder Michael Laudrup

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Ajax Amsterdam said on Wednesday they had signed Danish international midfielder Michael Laudrup from Japan's Vissel Kobe on a one-year contract with an option for a second season.

The 33-year-old Dane captains his national side and has previously played for Real Madrid and Barcelona.

Laudrup will link up with former Denmark captain Morten Olsen, who will be Ajax team coach next season.

## Babbel denies he was too greedy for United

BOONN (Reuters) - Bayern Munich defender Markus Babbel yesterday denied his move to Manchester United fell through because of his wage demands and accused the English champions of using him as a bargaining chip for other deals.

Babbel said media reports that he had originally demanded an annual salary of \$2.3 million were untrue.

"I'm being portrayed everywhere as a money-grabber and that's really not what I'm like," Babbel, 24, said.

He said Manchester United were never really interested in signing him. "They were using me as a decoy in order to be able to negotiate harder with another player," said Babbel, who did not name the other candidate.

## Napoli get stadium ban for cup violence

MILAN (Reuters) - Napoli were banned yesterday from using their San Paolo stadium for their opening Italian Cup match of next season after crowd violence marred this year's final against eventual winners Vicenza.

Italy's Serie A sporting judge also fined Napoli \$3,000 and Vicenza \$15,000.

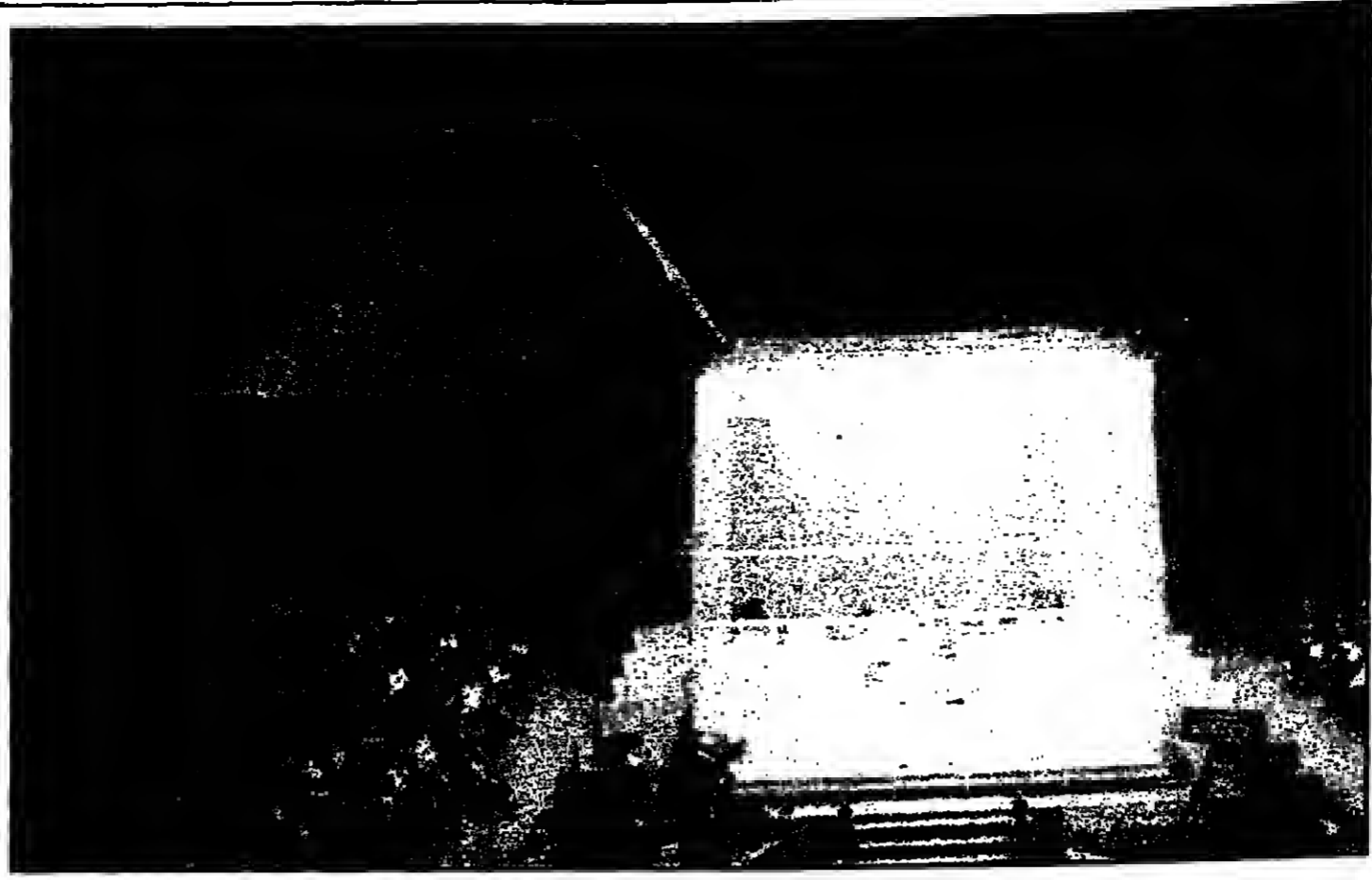
Napoli striker Nicola Caccia was given a three-match ban and a \$1,200 fine for elbowing an opponent and insulting the referee during the May 29 second leg of the final in Vicenza, who won their first trophy in 95 years.

## Lara fined for not arriving on time

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua (Reuters) - Brian Lara has been fined by West Indies team management for failing to arrive here on time for last week's first Test against Sri Lanka.

Lara, who had disciplinary problems at the World Cup early last year and on West Indies tour of Australia later in the year, has been fined 50 percent of his match fee for the first Test.

The West Indian players assembled in St. John's on Tuesday for the test starting on Friday, but Lara did not arrive until Wednesday night. His explanation that he missed his flight was not accepted as a satisfactory excuse by the team's management.



## They haven't landed!

This may look like an alien spaceship homing in on the pyramids, but it's not. It is, in fact, a floodlit squash court where the Al-Ahram international tournament was held over the past week. In Tuesday night's final, qualifier Peter Nicol of Scotland stunned Pakistani world champion Jansher Khan 12-15, 15-14, 15-12, 15-11 in one hour and 20 minutes, to win the tournament. Nicol avenged his loss to Khan in the final of the British Open in April. With prize money of \$170,000, the Al-Ahram, held in Cairo, is the world's richest squash event.

# Gonzalez lifts Texas past Rockies with homer in 11th

DENVER (Reuters) - Juan Gonzalez belted a two-run homer with one out in the top of the 11th inning Tuesday to lift the Texas Rangers to a 10-8 victory over the Colorado Rockies in the first interleague game at Coors Field.

The homer was the 422nd extra-base hit of Gonzalez's career, tying him with Ruben Sierra for the top spot in Rangers' history. Colorado closer Steve Reed (1-3) started the 11th and retired Ivan Rodriguez on a groundout, but Rusty Greer singled and Gonzalez lifted a 2-2 pitch over the right-field wall for the game-winning hit. In all, he drove in five runs.

Danny Patterson (5-3) tossed two scoreless innings and escaped a 10th-inning jam to notch the victory for Texas. The Rockies, who used seven relievers and twice rallied from five-run deficits, dropped to 1-4 in games against American League teams.

Colorado trailed 8-3 after seven innings, but Vinny Castilla hit a two-run homer in the eighth and the Rockies picked up three more runs in the ninth off Texas closer John Wetteland. Ellis Burks, who finished with five hits, smacked a two-run homer and Castilla singled home Dante Bichette to send the game into extra innings.

The Rangers took a 3-0 lead in the first on an RBI double by Greer, a run-scoring groundout by Gonzalez and a sacrifice fly by

Will Clark. Texas tacked on three more in the second on an RBI single by Greer and a two-run double by Gonzalez.

**Dodgers 4, Angels 3**  
In Los Angeles, Wilton Guerrero scored the tying run from second on a wild pitch with two out in the bottom of the ninth and Todd Zeile followed with his second homer of the game as the Dodgers rallied for a 4-3 victory over the Anaheim Angels.

The Angels appeared headed for the win in the first-ever regular-season meeting of the Los Angeles area clubs being billed as a "free-way series."

Anaheim closer Troy Percival got the last out of the eighth, but surrendered a leadoff single in the

ninth to Guerrero. Two outs later, he bounced a pitch past catcher Chad Kreuter, enabling Guerrero to score all the way from second.

**Giants 4, Mariners 3**  
In San Francisco, pinch-hitter Stan Javier belted a two-run homer in the sixth and three relievers combined for three scoreless innings as the Giants rallied for a 4-3 victory over the Seattle Mariners.

Seattle starter Jeff Fassero (6-3)

carried a 3-2 lead into the sixth, but gave up a leadoff single to Damon Berryhill.

Javier, batting for pitcher Kirk Rueter, hit a 1-0 pitch into the left-field bleachers to provide the winning margin.

Javier, who has hit both of his homers in interleague play, is batting .408 (20-for-49) over his last 15 games.

The series is being sold as a battle between superstars Ken Griffey of Seattle and the Giants' Barry Bonds.

"Those of you tuning in to watch the Barry Bonds-Ken Griffey show, forgot about Stan Javier," Bonds said.

**Athletics 10, Padres 3**  
In San Diego, Mark McGwire hit his 25th homer and drove in a pair of runs and Rafael Bourimall broke open the game with a three-run double in the eighth inning as the Oakland Athletics pounded the Padres 10-3.

McGwire homered in the second and added an RBI single in the third for Oakland.

The Athletics broke open a 3-3 game with four runs in the seventh and added three in the eighth on Bourimall's double.

Dane Johnson (1-0) won by getting the final two outs in the sixth. Aaron Small held the Padres scoreless over the final three innings. Reliever Pete Smith (1-1) suffered the loss, yielding four runs and three hits in one inning.

National League					American League				
East Division	W	L	Pct.	GB	East Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Atlanta	44	25	.638	-	Baltimore	48	20	.697	-
Florida	41	27	.603	2 1/2	New York	38	30	.559	9
Montreal	39	29	.574	4 1/2	Toronto	31	34	.477	14 1/2
New York	37	31	.544	6 1/2	Boston	30	38	.441	17
Philadelphia	22	46	.328	21	Detroit	29	37	.439	17
Central Division					Central Division				
Houston	34	36	.486	-	Cleveland	35	30	.538	-
Pittsburgh	33	35	.485	-	Kansas City	32	34	.485	3 1/2
St. Louis	31	37	.458	2	Minnesota	32	34	.485	3 1/2
Cincinnati	28	40	.412	5	Chicago	31	36	.463	5
Chicago	28	41	.408	5 1/2	West Division				
West Division					Seattle	38	30	.559	-
San Francisco	39	29	.574	-	Texas	36	30	.545	1
Colorado	36	33	.522	3 1/2	Anaheim	34	33	.507	3 1/2
Los Angeles	33	35	.485	6	Oakland	29	41	.414	10
San Diego	29	39	.426	10					

Tuesday's interleague games: Boston 12, Philadelphia 6; Florida 3, Detroit 2; Cleveland 5, Cincinnati 1; NY Yankees 6, NY Mets 3; Baltimore 5, Montreal 4; Atlanta 5, Toronto 7; Milwaukee 4, St. Louis 3; Minnesota 13, Pittsburgh 1; Houston 18, Kansas City 3; Chicago White Sox 5, Chicago Cubs 3; Texas 10, Colorado 5, 11 innings; Los Angeles 4, Anaheim 3; Oakland 18, San Diego 3; San Francisco 4, Seattle 3.

# ICC chief vows to tackle match-fixing

CALCUTTA (Reuters) - International Cricket Council (ICC) president Jagmohan Dalmiya yesterday promised to tackle the menace of betting and match-fixing.

"Issues like betting and match-fixing will not be swept under the carpet," Dalmiya told reporters on his return to Calcutta after taking over as ICC president at its annual meeting in London.

"The ICC possesses enough teeth to tackle match-fixing in international cricket if the menace raises its head," he said.

International cricket had its brush with match-fixing three years ago when Australians Shane Warne and Tim May charged the then Pakistan captain, Salim Malik with offering them bribes to lose a Test match.

The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) forwarded the statements of Warne and May to the ICC, which in turn asked the Pakistan cricket authorities to look into the matter.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) suspended Malik and team manager Intikhab Alam pending the inquiry by a Supreme Court judge.

The ACB wanted the game's governing body to hold an independent inquiry but the ICC chairman, Sir Clyde Walcott, expressed his helplessness, citing lack of power.

Warne and May did not appear in the inquiry by the Pakistani judge which exonerated Malik, who then returned to Test cricket after a two-year gap.

Pakistan opener Amir Sohail recently accused his team mates of throwing matches and former Indian Test all-rounder Manoj Prabhakar accused cricketers of being hand in glove with bookies in fixing matches.

Dalmiya said the cricket boards in various countries should be more effective in curbing the interlinked problems of betting and match-fixing.

# Ashes spotlight moves from Taylor to Atherton

LONDON (Reuters) - Presumably to mark Taylor's relief, the spotlight has switched from the Australian captain to his England counterpart Mike Atherton in the buildup to the second Test at Lord's today.

Taylor saved his Test place for the immediate future with a century of immense character and concentration in the opening Ashes Test at Edgbaston.

He has been further heartened by Australia's first tour win in a first-class match, an 84-run victory over Leicestershire on Monday which featured five wickets in an innings by Shane Warne and six in the match from replacement pacesman Paul Reiffel.

"We hadn't won a match for a month so the Leicesters result was important," Taylor commented. "We really looked as if we meant business in their second innings."

Australia, the unofficial world champions, have historically flourished at Lord's and have won their last three tests at cricket's world headquarters.

But for the moment the force is with England, who won the first Test within four days following a clean sweep of the three-match one-day series.

Their successes, along with the national soccer team's victory in the Tournoi de France and stir-

ring performances by the British Lions in South Africa, have generated an air of healthy euphoria among the British sporting public.

Now the pressure is on Atherton and his team to perform in the season's showpiece at Lord's, where England have beaten Australia only once this century.

Atherton, awarded the Order of the British Empire at the weekend, becomes England's longest serving captain today when he leads his side for the 42nd time in a Test.

The previous record was held by the late Peter May, who captained England in 41 Tests.

Nobody has questioned Atherton's ability as an opening batsman, reflected in an average of 45.55 since taking over as captain four years ago.

But he has won only three series in that time, although playing a full part in a credible 2-2 home draw with the West Indies in 1995.

His latest critic is former Test selector Fred Titmus. "Atherton is a fine player but one of the worst captains we have had since the war," Titmus commented on Monday.

"For him to get Peter May's record is a travesty." In a biography launched at Lord's on Tuesday, Atherton said he had taken the job because he

genuinely felt I could make an impact on the field." But he also acknowledged: "You can only captain an unsuccessful side for so long."

In a welcome vote of confidence, the England selectors did not even bother to meet before announcing an unchanged squad for Lord's, with the same 11 expected to play.

Australia have selected Reiffel in place of the injured Jason Gillespie and will probably keep faith with Michael Bevan, despite his weakness against the short, lifting delivery.

Bevan also struggled with his quick left-arm unorthodox spin in the first Test but remains the only backup to Warne.

Reiffel, who stepped off the aircraft straight into the match against Nottinghamshire, has bowled immaculately and with showers forecast at the end of the week could play an important part.

Team's (probable): England - Mike Atherton (captain), Mark Butcher, Alec Stewart, Nasser Hussain, Graham Thorpe, John Crawley, Mark Ealham, Robert Croft, Darren Gough, Andrew Caddick, Devon Malcolm.

Australia - Mark Taylor (captain), Matthew Elliott, Greg Blewett, Mark Waugh, Steve Waugh, Michael Bevan, Ian Healy, Shane Warne, Michael Kasprovics, Paul Reiffel, Glenn McGrath.

Sports Editors: Joseph Hoffmann and Chris Lewis

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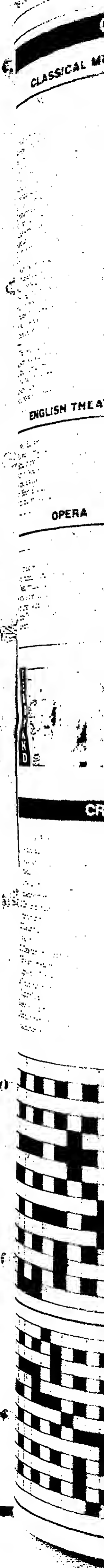
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הכזמן האחרון









# NEWS

in brief

## Driving teachers in North to strike today

Driving instructors in the North are striking all theory and road tests today to protest what they say is a shortage of examiners. The instructors say dozens of tests are being postponed every day and this places them under pressure from students, who in some cases have even made threats.

## Two remanded on weapons, car theft charges

David Dahari, 42, and Avinoam Hajbi, 37, both of Netanya, were charged in Tel Aviv District Court yesterday with transferring weapons and ammunition, and car theft. They were remanded until the next hearing on their case.

Police noted that both had extensive criminal records, and were caught with weapons and other paraphernalia in their stolen car that indicated they were planning to carry out a serious crime.

## Hammer 'feeling fine' after operation

Education Minister Zevulun Hammer is recuperating after abdominal surgery at Hadassah-University Hospital in Jerusalem's Ein Kerem. The hospital said there are still no results from the analysis of the tissue removed, but that Hammer is "feeling fine."



Zevulun Hammer (Efraim Kilback)

Doctors said they are pleased with Hammer's speedy recovery, and hope he will be able to return to work next week.

## Army to build new prison

The IDF has been given funding to start planning a new prison which will consolidate various IDF brigades into one structure and locate it near a military court, the army said yesterday. The new prison is not expected to be built for a number of years, but when it is, the army will shut down Prison 4, Prison 6 and Prison 400. These prisons date from the British Mandate era and some, such as Prison 4 at Tzrifin, sits on prime land that could be sold to help finance the construction of a new prison. Prison 400, where women prisoners are held, is also in Tzrifin and Prison 6 is near Adit in the North.

## Values Administration approved

Civil Service Commissioner Shmuel Hollander gave the Education Ministry a green light to establish an Administration for Values Education, on condition it employs both secular and religious staffers and that the positions are filled via proper tenders, Israel Radio reported. The decision drew criticism from many quarters. Former education minister Amnon Rubinstein (Meretz), said the administration would "infiltrate into the secular educational system propaganda that is foreign to the humanistic and pluralistic values of the secular system," and would require additional funds at a time when classroom hours are being cut back. The Movement for Quality Government threatened legal action, noting that the ministry's Unit for Democracy Education was being closed, ostensibly for lack of funds.

## Ministry okays transplant costs in US

The Health Ministry has approved the spending of NIS 550,000 for an intestinal transplant in the US for a 31-year-old woman. The operation cannot be performed here because doctors don't have enough experience with the rare procedure. The expense will be covered by Kupat Holim Clalit, of which she is a member, and by the supplementary-insurance company affiliated with Clalit. The ministry said it was the first time since the National Health Insurance Law came into effect that it had to order a health fund to cover a transplant procedure.

## New president of Int'l Council of Women

Prina Herzog, a senior adviser to the Health Ministry, has become the first Israeli president of the International Council of Women, a roof body of all women's organizations in the world. Herzog, a pharmacist by profession who for years represented Israel in the World Health Organization as head of the ministry's international affairs department, was chosen by a majority vote.

## New technique used to remove gall bladder

A patient's infected gall bladder was removed at Assaf Harofe Hospital in Tzrifin using an unusual laparoscopy ("keyhole") technique in which an optic fiber only two millimeters in diameter is inserted into the navel and the organ is pulled out of a somewhat larger hole in the skin. It was the first operation of its kind in Israel. The new technique reduces pain, shortens recovery and the scars are almost invisible, compared to routine laparoscopy, in which the incisions are larger due to thicker optic systems.

## Prina Bor reelected as B'nai B'rith president

The Israel Chapter of B'nai B'rith has reelected Prina Bor to serve a fourth term as president at the end of its annual convention in Tel Aviv yesterday. Bor presented a medal of honor to former General Security Service head Karmi Gillon on behalf of his late grandfather, Gad Frumkin, the only Jew to serve on the Supreme Court during the British Mandate period and president of B'nai B'rith from 1952-57.

# Book: France has contract to supply uranium to Iran

By ELDAD BECK

PARIS — France is committed by an official contract to transfer enriched uranium to Iran that can be used by the Iranians to produce nuclear bombs, according to a book published this week in France.

The book suggests that Iran might be receiving the enriched uranium through Gabon, whose uranium mines are under French trusteeship.

The book, *A War*, written by journalist Dominique Lorentz, says the commitment to transfer to Iran 10 percent of the enriched uranium produced by the French Eurodif nuclear company was included in a

cooperation treaty signed by France and Iran in 1974, when Iran was governed by the Shah.

After the Islamic revolution in Iran, France tried to avoid supplying Iran with the enriched uranium, even though this violated the treaty. But the book argues that after a long series of terrorist actions directed by Tehran against French targets around the world, mainly in Lebanon, the French administration gave in and resumed the supply. It claims that in 1987, then-prime minister Jacques Chirac was the first to give in after a wave of terrorist attacks in Paris.

However, it was under the supervision of late president François

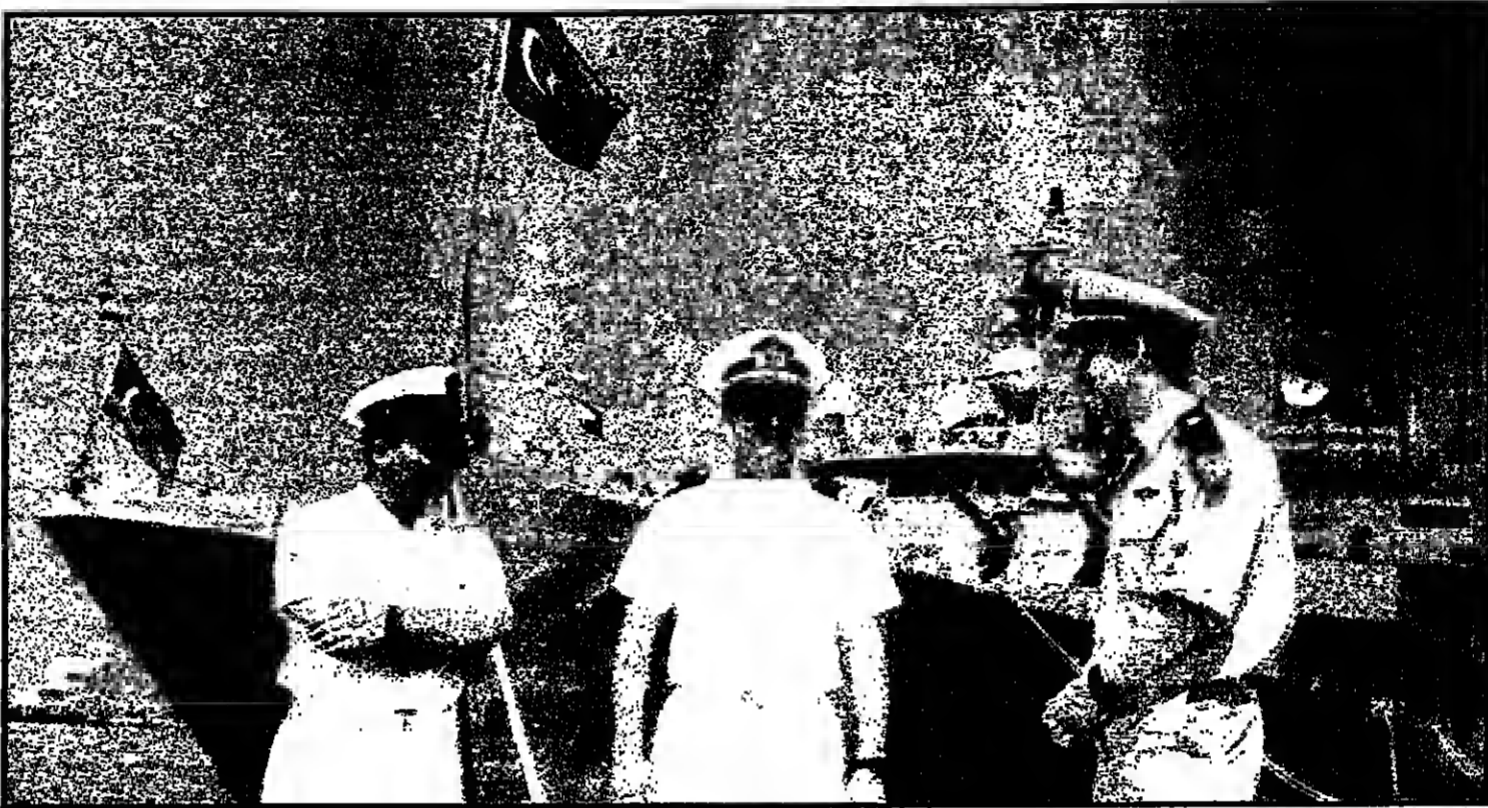
Mitterrand in 1991 that the government finalized the agreement on the disputed uranium supply.

"President Chirac can no longer claim that France and Europe are maintaining a critical dialogue with Iran, since under the treaty signed in '74, Iran is a full partner in the biggest European nuclear complex (Eurodif), and is a shareholder that holds in its hands the right to veto any decision concerning Eurodif activities," Lorentz told *The Jerusalem Post*. He said Iran was given the shares in exchange for a loan of \$1 billion needed for the construction of the Eurodif facilities.

Defense Minister Yitzhak

Mordechai said yesterday in Paris, after Iran announced that it had tested a new cruise missile designed to strike ships, that Israel is concerned by the development of advanced military systems in Iran.

"There is a reason to be concerned about every evolution of advanced armament systems in Iran, especially in the domain of missiles and non-conventional weapons. All the free nations of the world should make an enormous effort to stop the momentum of producing advanced weapons in Iran," Mordechai said, adding that he had raised the issue during talks with US officials earlier this week in Washington.



Turkish naval officers pose Tuesday in front of one of the five Turkish ships that docked in Haifa this week for a rest stop. (Ron Shitzer, courtesy of 'Ma'ariv')

## Five Turkish Navy ships in Haifa for R&R

By DAVID RUDGE

Turkish flags fluttered in the wind at Haifa Port yesterday, indicating that Turkish tourists come here, too.

This time they are uniformed ones. The flags belong to five ships of the Turkish navy — reportedly the biggest task group of its kind ever to visit Israel's shores.

The visit of the task group is unofficial but nevertheless significant in light of its size and the recent reports of proposed joint exercises between Israeli and Turkish forces.

The naval task group anchored in Haifa consists of two frigates, a destroyer, a submarine and a logistics ship with a total of over 1,000 officers and crew aboard.

"The reason for the visit is to give the officers and crew the opportunity for rest and recreation in Haifa," said Capt. Huseyin Hoshgit, that commodore of the task group. He said the ships were part of a large Turkish Navy task force which has been conducting a major exercise, known as "Seawolf 97," in the Aegean and Mediterranean.

Groups from the task force are currently visiting ports in Turkey, northern Cyprus and Alexandria in Egypt, as well as Haifa, he said.

He said many of the officers and crew of the ships were taking time out to see more of the country and trips had been organized for them to Jerusalem and Acre during their stay, which began on Monday and will end on Friday.

Hoshgit held a reception aboard his flagship for Israeli naval officers, senior officials and

members of the Turkish Embassy shortly after the ships arrived in Haifa port. On Tuesday, he and several of his officers were hosted by Haifa Mayor Amram Mizna at City Hall.

The commodore expressed his gratitude to the commander of the naval base in Haifa and the navy in general for the warm reception and hospitality they had been shown. He said he would be advising the naval authorities in Turkey about this and recommending that further visits should be arranged.

Mizna warmly welcomed the visit of the Turkish Navy and said he hoped that they would in future be able to treat Haifa as a virtual "home port."

Judging by the smiles of crew returning to the ship from shore leave yesterday, the visit of Haifa has been a success.

## Unanimous support for Public safe from VX nerve gas attack bills to restore senior citizens' benefits

By LIAT COLLINS

Three bills which would give back to senior citizens all the economic benefits they lost in the last state budget passed preliminary reading in the Knesset yesterday. The bills were unanimously supported by 62 MKs from both coalition and opposition parties. They do not have government backing, however.

Under the bills, pensioners would

have a 50% discount on television license fees, intercity public transport, medicines and entrance to museums, nature reserves, parks and other leisure sites, and a 30% discount on municipal rates for homes up to 100 sq.m.

The bills were filed separately by MKs Maxim Levy (Geshet), chairman of the Labor and Social Affairs Committee, Labor faction chairman Ra'anan Cohen and Anat Maor (Meretz). They were forwarded to the Labor and Social Affairs Committee to be prepared for further readings. Levy said he hopes the bills will be finalized before the Knesset's summer recess begins in August.

No minister responded to the bills in the plenum despite the government's strong objections to them. The Finance Ministry says that the cost of the bills would amount to millions of shekels.

Levy said all the factions are a part of the injustice caused to the pensioners. Cohen said the pensioners were returning "what the government had stolen from the pensioners." Maor said the bills "would right a wrong."

Scores of senior citizens from all over the country were present in the visitors' gallery for the vote.

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

The public is relatively safe from the deadly effects of a Syrian VX nerve agent attack, as long as they stay in their sealed rooms or don a heavy layer of clothing, OC Home Front Command Maj.-Gen. Shmuel Arad said yesterday.

Arad said that the working assumption is that surface-to-surface missiles armed with chemical warheads are an increasingly realistic threat and that the Syrians have the capability to attack Israel with the deadly chemical VX nerve agent. But he said the equipment already in the hands of the public would provide "reasonable" protection against VX liquid, which is far more lethal and can remain in the affected area for a longer period of time than Sarin nerve gas. Even a drop of VX on the skin can be lethal.

"We are speaking of a solution which is composed of a number of elements. The personal protection of a gas mask given to every citizen ... together with the safety rooms and shelters," Arad said. "Give a reasonable solution to conventional and nonconventional weapons."

Arad said that putting on long underwear, clothes, an impermeable coat like a wind breaker, and gloves is enough to protect someone from VX drops as he makes his way from a safe room out of the infected area. "We aren't talking of living or functioning in an area of VX, only getting out," Arad said.

He also said the offensive arm of the IDF, as well as the improvements made in an early warning system, were steadily increasing the overall defense of the public against Scud missiles.

The present warning system consists of an American spy satellite detecting a rocket launch. It

then relays it to a US-based downlink station, where the data is deciphered and shot back up to a communication satellite which sends it to Israel. From that moment it now takes just nine seconds to activate sirens throughout the country. Assuming the missile is coming from about 300 kilometers away, this leaves about three minutes for people to get into their safe rooms and don their gas masks before the warhead hits.

Arad explained that part of the defense of the country's citizens rests on the deterrent posture of the IDF and the warnings that Israel would inflict heavy punishment for any use of nonconventional weapons.

Sull, Arad said the Home Front is facing difficulties in maintaining the level of protection since government funding has stopped. Arad said that they have not yet received the NIS 50m. budgeted this year for their gas mask updating program, and warned that the IDF may have to cease the program within a month if the money did not come.

Head of IDF Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon confirmed in a recent interview that Syria was arming Scud warheads with VX agent. Syria was also in the development stage of biological weapons, he said.

There are various numbers of estimated casualties from a chemical attack on Israel. According to an internal report from Rafael, 15 people would be injured from every Scud and for every two injured there would be one fatality. It also said that if the Scuds hit during a state of emergency while people were in their sealed rooms, then only 2.6 people would be injured with each Scud. But senior Home Front commanders said yesterday they believe casualties would be "much higher."

**WEATHER**

Haifa	23-29
Tiberias	21-30
Afula	23-32
Semeria	21-32
Tel Aviv	22-29
Jerusalem	21-32
Beerseheba	20-35
Dead Sea	27-33
Elitz	28-31

Forecast: Partly cloudy to clear. Rise in temperatures.

**AROUND THE WORLD**

	LOW	F	C	WIND
Amsterdam	06	43	10	clear
Berlin	10	50	10	cloudy
Buenos Aires	07	45	10	rain
Chicago	21	70	21	clear
London	12	57	14	cloudy
Copenhagen	15	59	15	clear
Frankfurt	11	52	12	cloudy
Geneva	14	57	14	clear
Helsinki	13	56	13	cloudy
Hong Kong	22	72	22	rain
Jakarta	01	34	19	clear
London	12	54	12	cloudy
Labron	15	54	12	cloudy
Los Angeles	18	64	18	rain
Madrid	14	57	14	rain
Manila	13	56	13	clear
Moscow	11	50	11	rain
New York	18	64	18	rain
Paris	12	54	12	clear
Rome	17	62	17	clear
Stockholm	10	50	10	cloudy
Sydney	08	48	9	clear
Tokyo	19	48	15	rain
Toronto	13	55	12	rain
Vancouver	14	55	13	rain
Zurich	11	52	12	rain

**Winning cards**

The winning cards in yesterday's Chance draw (169/97) were the king of spades, king of hearts, seven of diamonds, and ace of clubs. The results of the second draw (170/97) were the seven of spades, seven of hearts, eight of diamonds, and seven of clubs.

## Report: Get Israelis on Internet

By JUDY SIEGEL

The majority of Israelis will eventually conduct their business with the authorities over the Internet, "mine" information from public databases and use the computer to strengthen contacts with Diaspora Jewry.

This is the vision of a special working committee on Preparing Israel for the Information Era, whose report was presented to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu yesterday ... on a computer diskette.

The committee, comprising Knesset Computer Communications and Information Committee chairman MK Michael Eitan, National Computer Communications and Information Committee chairman Dr. Danny Dolev, and nine other experts, worked for many months on the project. The 11-chapter report was approved by the Knesset; implementing it fully will require passage of legislation, including a freedom of information law.

The team recommended that a unit for preparing Israel for the information age be set up in the Prime Minister's Office; this body would translate government decisions in this field into detailed working plans and coordinate among state agencies, follow up decisions and provide assistance to government offices. In addition, a national council for information technology, comprising public representatives and experts in the universities, commerce and industry, should be established.

Implementation of the recommendations, said Eitan, will launch a new era of government services. All state offices will establish Internet sites with updated information. The government will require all state offices to use e-mail for communicating among themselves and with residents. Every resident who requests it will receive a way of identifying himself electronically to cut red tape while using the information superhighway.

The committee urged that schools, from first grade, train pupils to become adept at Internet use. This, they said, will improve human capital and preserve Israel's ability to compete economically and strengthen the values of democracy and national solidarity. All schools should be equipped with computer labs and hooked up to the Internet no later than the year 2000. Efforts should be made to further the use of Hebrew, and not only English, on Israeli sites.

The Internet would be used to promote ties with Jewish communities abroad, including a "Virtual Jewish University," the teaching of Hebrew and Jewish heritage, encouraging aliyah and promoting encounters between Diaspora and Israeli youth.

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